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ABSTRACT

This follow-up study of a 1979 survey of families involved in New York City's public day care program is based on field interviews with a random sample of 211 families in contact with the program in the past 4 years. Section 1 of this report describes the Agency for Child Development's day care programs for children from low-income working families and provides a description of the family survey, a rationale for and summary of results of the follow-up study, an overview of current funding patterns for day care, and recommendations. In section 2, lines of inquiry pursued in the follow-up study are described, including discussion of how families managed after being terminated from the day care program, what stresses they experienced, and how they rated the alternative arrangements they made. The several subsections of section 3 describe the following aspects of the follow-up study: (1) characteristics of the families involved; (2) choices made, criteria used, and barriers encountered by parents selecting child care; (3) difficulties in quantifying the number of children left alone while parents work; (4) alternatives used by families terminated from public day care or waiting to be enrolled, including a comparison between custodial and public day care; (5) satisfaction of parents with their day care arrangements; (6) case examples; and (7) the relationship between employment and child care. Related materials are appended. (Author/RH)

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Day Care and the Working Poor:

The Struggle for Self-Sufficiency

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Presents

Day Care and the Working Poor:

The Struggle for Self-Sufficiency

A comprehensive study of how working poor families involved in New York City's public day care programs manage their family life and work responsibilities.

by

GEORGIA L. McMURRAY

and

DOLORES P. KAZANJIAN

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Preface

This study grew out of a survey conducted by the Community Service Society in 1979 of families who had been involved in New York City's public day care program. These families had left the City's program for a variety of reasons, but mostly because they were no longer eligible for service. In large measure they were terminated because public day care services had been reduced due to the City's continuing fiscal crisis -- a portent of actions we have now seen undertaken at the federal level.

In reviewing the findings of our 1979 survey, CSS wondered about the social and economic costs the respondents might be bearing as they attempted to maintain their self-sufficiency in the face of reduced public support for day care. We were struck particularly by parents' ofttimes heroic struggles, above all by the single mothers, to continue to work at self-supporting jobs while carrying on their parenting role.

Studies of public programs usually concentrate on participation and utilization patterns, provision of services, or expenditures. In planning a follow-up to our survey, we decided instead to concentrate on the families themselves, to use their experiences to gain insight into the efficacy of public day care as a support to parents and to children.

This follow-up study, "Day Care and the Working Poor: The Struggle for Self-Sufficiency," is based on field interviews with a random sample of 211 families who have had contact with New York City's public day care program in the past four years. Most of the persons we interviewed were mothers (by and large, the only parent in the home). Most were Black or Hispanic (usually Puerto Rican), with limited financial means (median income, $7,830). There were typically two children in the home.

Despite austere economic circumstances, most of the parents strove to maintain their families with only a modicum of public support. They sought assistance, not dependency. However, the cracks in their elaborate schemes for survival became glaringly apparent when reliable low-cost day care was unavailable. We learned that many parents were leaving children without adult supervision, stretching income to the breaking point to pay for private child care, being late for or losing time from work, which they could ill afford. Even so, they struggled to meet the demands of home and work with less money than most, and, frequently, with no support from a spouse, family or friends.

Their lives stand as testimony to the human capacity and will to struggle for survival. Nevertheless, we must question whether the long term consequences of that struggle for family life and the development of children may be antithetical to the interests of society at large. It is families such as those in our study who will be the hardest hit by the recently-imposed federal cutbacks in social programs. We hope that this study, and others which undoubtedly will follow, can serve to document the actual economic and human impact of reductions in public social spending on the capacity of families to manage their own lives.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Carnegie Corporation, especially Barbara Finberg, for its support of the study. No research of this sort, consisting of field interviews in the many neighborhoods of New York City, could be carried out without the commitment and involvement of many. First of all, we wish to thank Charlotte Smith, field supervisor and research assistant, and Sandra Elliot, who assisted in coordinating the project. Responsibility for computer programming was lodged with Jonathan Hughes, who had the enormous task of reconciling a voluminous amount of data; Marc Glassman also provided statistical consultation and William Sherman, assistance with data analysis. The CSS staff also contributed to the preparation of this report, most notably Sue Weis in conducting library research, Linda Wolf Jones in researching income maintenance policies, and Frank Caro, in reviewing a first draft of the manuscript, along with Estherlista Kutchera who transcribed several sections. Special appreciation must be expressed to Andrea Fooner who served as editor/writer and who contributed much information on employer-sponsored child care.

Above all, the most heartfelt gratitude is to be bestowed upon Dolores P. Kazanjian who served as project director, directing the completion of the analytic tasks, guiding the energies of a dedicated group of interviewers, and participating in the preparation of the final report.

And to the families whose lives we present, may the public appreciation of their daily struggles and the hope that they sustain serve as an expression of gratitude for their participation in this study.

Georgia L. McMurray
Principal Investigator
April, 1982

ABSTRACT

SECTION I: THE NEED FOR DAY CARE: CURRENT REALITIES

Description of New York City's Agency for Child Development's day care programs for children from low-income working families; reasons for CSS embarking on current (Phase II) study; summary description of Phase I (conducted in 1979); an outline of Phase II's major findings; current funding patterns for day care; recommendations.

SECTION II: STUDY METHODOLOGY

Explanation of sample selection. Lines of inquiry: How did terminated families manage? What stresses did they experience? How did they rate the alternate arrangements they made? Notes on data collection and analysis.

SECTION III: STUDY FINDINGS: ASPECTS OF THE STRUGGLE OF WORKING POOR FAMILIES TO SECURE CARE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

A. Characteristics of the Families Studied

The typical parent in the study: female, single, poor and minority who might once have been on welfare but was now working and struggling to be self-sufficient. Representative case examples. Outline of demographic characteristics of the study sample, including: group differences; marital status and income; employment; racial/ethnic characteristics.

B. Making Choices

How parents made choices about employment and care of their children. Criteria parents used to select child care, and barriers to finding such care.

C. Children Left Alone

Difficulty of quantifying number of children left alone while parents work. Authors estimate that more than half the children in this study were regularly or occasionally left without supervision for part of their parents' work day. Despite assertions that their children were old enough and responsible enough, probing revealed that most parents experienced great ambivalence, concern and dissatisfaction, but felt they had no other choice. Review of available studies reveals the need for further documentation and analysis of the impact of this factor on children and families.

D. Characteristics of Private Care Arrangements

Alternatives used by families terminated from public day care or waiting to be enrolled: mostly custodial care that was costly, discontinuous and unreliable. Description of typical arrangements. Comparisons (including data tables) with public day care in terms of type of caregiver, continuity of care, existence of multiple arrangements to care for a child, frequency of change in arrangements, reliability, adequacy of coverage, convenience for parent, and cost.

E. Parents' Experiences with Public and Private Arrangements for Care

Parents generally expressed satisfaction with their arrangements, yet parents overwhelmingly expressed a preference for public day care, whether enrolled in public programs or terminated. Authors of this study conclude that satisfaction with alternate arrangements was often overstated.

F. Managing Work and Family Responsibilities

Summaries of many case examples. Public day care was an important support; those families enrolled found it easier to cope. Those with a natural support system (relatives, friends, family) had a much easier time, but many were without such support.

G. Employment

Fifty-six per cent of the study sample were working; 15% were looking for work. Examination of relationships between employment and child care. Those who had received public day care had greater success in coming off public assistance than those who had not (Table 6, page 88). Unreliable or unstable child care arrangements had a negative effect on parents' employment (attendance, punctuality, productivity, promotability).

SECTION IV: DAY CARE OPTIONS FOR THE '80s

Issues emerging from this study: children left alone while parents work; parents' lack of access to information about day care services; how recent reductions in federal day care supports are bound to result in even greater hardships for families throughout the nation, especially the vulnerable working poor.

Analysis of the probable consequences of current federal policies affecting public day care and an outline of remedies. Improving use of current resources. Feasible options for day care supports by employers in the private sector. Arguments for extending preschool and after-school services for children.

Beyond any debates over policies or budgets, the issue of day care is about the future of our children and the extent to which we insist on quality care for them today.

SECTION I

THE NEED FOR DAY CARE: CURRENT REALITIES

Working mothers have become the common denominator of American family life, middle class, poor or affluent. The traditional image of a two-parent family with father as breadwinner and mother at home caring for the children has given way to new realities. The majority of women now work outside the home, even as they continue to carry homemaking responsibilities, and most work out of economic necessity. Families today need the mother's income, and they need someone to care for the children while mother works.

Many public policy makers do not recognize these facts or the implications for family life. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of mothers with children age 18 and under who have taken income-producing jobs has increased steadily over the past 10 years, from 39% in 1970 to 54% in 1980.[1] 43% of mothers with children under age 6 now work, a 13% increase over the 29% employed in 1970.[2] Statistics on the earnings of American families quickly demonstrate why.

In the second quarter of 1981, 40% of American families had two parents working and their average weekly earnings were $544; for two-parent families with one parent working, only $332.[3] Though the income of America's working families increased 7.1% in the second quarter of 1981, the Consumer Price Index for the same period rose even higher, by 11.2%.

Clearly, having two incomes assures that the average American family will be better able to pay bills, including the rent, on time, buy the children shoes and clothes when they need them, and go out to a movie now and then. And for many two incomes means the difference between having or not having enough to eat. Only one-fifth of all jobs in the United States pays enough to support a family of four satisfactorily. In most homes, the second parent must work as well.

For single-parent families only one income is usually available, so the economic necessity for mothers in these houses to work is even more compelling. 17.4% of all families, almost double the number in 1970, are now headed by women alone,[4] including 11.6% of White families and 40.5% of Black families. Their average weekly income is $199--almost two-thirds less than the income of families with two parents working. If single parents are to provide for their families through paid employment outside the home, then providing care for their young children while they work is a must.

Quality child care at low cost for working families is a scarce commodity in this country. This is no less true in New York City.

CSS originally investigated the effects of changes in day care policies on working families at the request of New York City's Agency for Child Development (ACD). A unit of the City's Human Resources Administration, ACD administers a variety of day care programs for children primarily from low-income working families.*

In Fiscal Year 1980, according to ACD, about 42,000 children were enrolled in public day care programs budgeted at $141.8 million, both full-day programs for preschoolers as well as after-school supervision for children six years old and over. ACD's programs include:

Group Day Care: Care for groups of children at a center primary staffed by licensed teachers, which offers a structured preschool educational program, including health, nutrition and recreational services as well as the development of socialization skills. The average cost per child is $350 per month for full-time care.

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*Day care and child care are often used interchangeably. In this study, day care is used primarily to refer to publicly-funded care. Child care is used to mean any type of care of a child, on a regular basis, for all or part of the day, by someone other than the primary caretaker (the adult with the major responsibility for raising the child). Child care arrangements might include babysitting, a recreation program or a nursery school, as well as day care. Except where indicated, child care arrangements do not include public school, though we recognize that school attendance is in fact a form of child care and was considered so by many of the parents in our survey.

Family Day Care: Care for up to six children in a private home licensed by the agency. Besides supervised child care, meals and tutoring are also provided. The family day care provider is usually trained by ACD. Licensing regulations permit no more than six children in each home. The average cost of care per child is $215 per month.

ACD contracts with private non-profit groups to run these programs. Currently there are about 330 centers and 1,300 family day care homes.

Head Start, the federally funded program which provides full- or half-day services for preschoolers from low-income families, is also under the aegis of ACD, but is not considered part of the City's day care program, although some working mothers use Head Start, in conjunction with other child care arrangements, to provide supervision for their children.

In 1978, ACD asked CSS to study how the loss of day care services affected families who had participated in the City's program. Concern was prompted by the fact that after several years of growth, the City's day care program had suffered a major reduction in services. (As a result of New York City's fiscal crisis during the mid-'70s, 77 day care centers had been closed and 5,000 children terminated; subsequently, eligibility was further restricted by income, and the quality diminished through reductions in staff.) The City wanted to know, as did CSS, whether mothers stopped working and went on welfare; or whether they continued working and made other arrangements for their children.

To determine how families fared after losing public day care, CSS conducted an extensive telephone survey in 1979 with 500 families. The sample consisted of parents whose children had been enrolled in the City's program. About half had been terminated involuntarily. Of these, 56.5% failed to appear for recertification, either because they believed themselves ineligible, or because of disabilities or personal reasons. The other 43.5% were documented as ineligible for reasons of income or because of failure to document an "approved" reason for care.[5]

We found there was neither a significant loss of jobs, nor a significant increase in the number of families receiving public assistance after losing day care. Most families did find some way to manage.

However, parents reported that their productivity at work was affected and, more important, many expressed concerns about their children's well-being and their own capacity to handle both job and home responsibilities.* These findings prompted CSS to plan an in-depth exploration of the experiences of families who had at one time either sought or been enrolled in public day care.

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*See Appendix A, Highlights of Phase I, A Study of New York City's Day Care Eligibility Policies.

This report, Day Care and the Working Poor: The Struggle for Self-Sufficiency, is a follow-up study to our initial survey (The Day Care Eligibility Study), and was made possible by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. It is based upon home interviews with over 200 families* during 1980-1981, almost half of whom had participated in the original telephone survey. We also included families still in the City's program plus others on the waiting list as comparison groups for the families who had been terminated.

In this expanded study, CSS found that:

- 95% of the mothers interviewed had worked at some time in their lives. Of these, 71% were still in the labor force (56% actually working and 15% looking for work). The respondents in the study were predominantly single parents whose median income was under $8,000 a year. Those using private child care (63%), whether exclusively or as a supplement to public day care, paid on the average $31 weekly.

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*Note that no significant differences were found between the families who were interviewed and those who were not. (See Section II and Appendix D.)

- Public day care appeared to be an important factor in helping low-income families become and remain self-sufficient. Among those who had ever received public assistance, the highest rate of success in terminating from public assistance and remaining self-sufficient was achieved by the enrolled group (60%). Further, those who had been in public day care at one time had a better rate of success in terminating and staying off public assistance than those who had never been enrolled (47.9% of those terminated compared to 33.3% of those still on the waiting list).

- Regardless of the form of child care, over 40% of the families had searched for at least one month to find someone to mind their children. Word-of-mouth was the most prevalent method used to locate child care.

- 19% of the families in the study admitted that they had to leave their children unsupervised during all or part of the day. Over one-fifth of these parents began such practices when the children were seven years old or even younger. Older siblings usually assumed child care responsibilities when they were nearing eleven years of age. Almost half the parents expressed dissatisfaction with such arrangements; those who claimed to be satisfied did so with overtones of ambivalence and concern.

- Child care outside of public day care often proved unreliable, breaking down at least one to one-and-a-half times a month. 40% of the families interviewed reported problems with job punctuality and 30% with absenteeism as a result of such breakdowns.

- Generally the families in the study were struggling to make ends meet and to balance work and family responsibilities. In this vein, 48% reported difficulties in reaching such an accommodation. Significantly, families in the City's day care program found managing less difficult (34.9%) compared to those who had been terminated (56.4%) and those on the waiting list (50%).

- Although family and friends were a major source of support to the parents in the study in balancing work and home responsibilities (48%), many of those interviewed (30%) reported that they had no one available to help them.

- The families reported a decided preference for public day care. This might be expected, given the sample selection. They, of course, stressed the advantages of coverage and convenience, but they also pointed out the availability of nutrition and education services for their children.

To summarize the needs and concerns of these low-income families: care of their children was central to their lives; the mothers' need for income and their desire for a life outside the home were on a par with other working women; and they made phenomenal efforts to assure safe and adequate arrangements for their children.

Broadly speaking, most working parents have difficulty finding low-cost quality care for their children. Generally, they must rely on several sources of care as a substitute. For instance, when both husband and wife are wage-earners, they may arrange their schedules so that one of them can be home to care for the children while the other is at work. They may also use babysitters, neighbors, relatives or older siblings.[6]

Full-time publicly-funded day care as a support for working families is available for less than 1% of this nation's children; on the other hand, the National Child Care Consumer Survey reports that a majority of all U.S. children under six are enrolled in some kind of part-time educational preschool program, which means Head Start, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten or private nursery school.[7] Working parents need child care for their children, and increasingly, our study and others confirm that most parents seek preschool education for their children as well. Because of these dual needs and the shortage of full-day programs, many parents must use multiple arrangements to provide for both the care and the education of their young children. Multiple arrangements cost time, energy and money, and are bound to be more difficult for low-income families to manage.

Although the vast majority of working families need child care services, public policies and services are both inadequate and a maze of contradictions. For example, the most recent changes in the federal Child Care Tax Credit will undoubtedly offer some tax savings to middle income families, but appear ineffective for those with lower incomes. Further, there is a lack of public or private planning for expansion of needed services or for quality assurance. Because of the budget reconciliation legislation recently enacted in Washington, the availability and quality of day care for working poor families, such as those in this study, will be further limited as follows:*

> Under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, the allowable child care costs have been reduced. The actual amount of child care costs to be disregarded is now limited to no more than $160 a month per child. Additionally, gross income for eligibility determination is now limited to 150% of the standard of need.
>
> Title XX funding, the major public support for day care programs, has been reduced to $2.4 billion nationwide, a 25% cut. States are no longer required to match federal spending, reserve a portion of services for welfare recipients, or restrict eligibility to families with incomes below 115% of the state median income. Furthermore, federal standards for day care have been suspended and the Child Care Food Program now subsidizes just two meals and one snack instead of three meals and two snacks as before.

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*See Appendix B, Implications of Recent Federal Legislative Changes.

It is too soon to tally all the national consequences of the withdrawal of federal supports for human services; however, we believe this CSS study of the effects of New York City's cutbacks pinpoints some key issues that will inevitably frame the public debate on child care. For example:

- What are the consequences of public policies that require lower-income families to spend a disproportionate amount of their earned income on child care in order to be self-supporting, and for care that is custodial at best? At what point does it become more economical not to work?
- Are current federal policies, in fact, pushing women out of the labor market? How will this affect women's self esteem and the economic viability of the family?

The issue of child care does not belong to the poor alone. The U.S. News and World Report of September 14, 1981 speaks poignantly of the millions of children, in all economic groups, who need child care because their parents are working.[8] Many are left alone. Latchkey children used to be a phenomenon of the poor, but like drug abuse among the young and pregnancy among teenagers, the problem has now reached the middle class.

The absence of affordable, reliable child care has economic consequences as well. Because of their responsibilities at home, women workers have a higher rate of absenteeism than men, 4.0 days a month lost for women, compared with 2.9 for men in May 1980, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Other studies besides our own document how central reliable child care is to a productive female labor force.[9] The care of children ultimately affects our national productivity, as well as the quality of our social existence.

The authors of this study, along with the Community Service Society, believe that we must press the conscience of our nation about its children, and we must, above all, be specific about what needs to be done. There is no single, optimal solution to the child care issue in our pluralistic society. Several quality alternatives are needed. We therefore recommend a firm government commitment to insure that the public and private sectors provide a cost-effective system of child care and other preschool services for working poor families.

Beyond any debates over policies or budgets, the issue of day care is about children, about their care and safety, and about their present and future well-being. It is about the extent to which we as parents, as professionals and as citizens care about the future of our children and insist on quality care for them today.

REFERENCES FOR SECTION I

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How did families manage when they were terminated from public day care? What was the relative adequacy and cost of the alternate arrangements they made? What was the impact on employment and family life?

SECTION II

STUDY METHODOLOGY

Day Care and the Working Poor was initially designed to provide an in-depth examination of families who had lost publicly-subsidized day care services: the choices available to them; the alternate arrangements they made; their experiences with those arrangements; and the relationships between child care arrangements and employment, income and family life. Following up on the first phase of the study, which obtained information by telephone about the loss of day care services, CSS used home interviews to record the experiences of a subset of families from Phase I, and to compare them to families still enrolled in public day care at the time of the interview, and to another group deemed eligible and placed on the waiting list.

Sample Selection

It was determined that, in order to achieve the desired sample of at least 200 cases, a pool of approximately five times that size was needed. A 1003-case sample was randomly selected, as described below. These individuals were telephoned in random order, screened to confirm their eligibility for inclusion in the sample, and asked for their cooperation in agreeing to be interviewed.

In total, 211 individuals were interviewed: 103 from the terminated group, 59 from the enrolled group, and 49 from the waiting list group.

An analysis of key demographic variables revealed no significant differences between respondents and non-respondents.* Nor did there appear to be significant differences between the samples and the population they represented for the terminated and enrolled groups. No comparative data were available on the waiting list population.

The experiences of the families interviewed, therefore, are probably representative of other, similar families who have had contact with, and been deemed eligible for, the New York City day care program. We do not claim broader applicability of the findings, although certainly the struggle to survive described in this report will be familiar to many low-income, working families. A description of the sample selection process for each group follows.

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*See Appendix D for further details.

Terminated Group: This sample was a subset of those who had been interviewed in the initial survey. The entire group of 501 individuals who had previously been interviewed were telephoned in random order to request their participation in the follow-up study; 103 persons agreed to be re-interviewed.

The original, larger sample from which this group was chosen was a random sample, stratified by claim category (a proxy measure for income).*

Enrolled Group: A pool of 252 cases was randomly selected by computer from the May 1980 list of those enrolled in the City's day care program. 59 persons from this pool agreed to be interviewed.

Waiting List Group: A proportional random sample, stratified by ACD Resource Area (the geographical district for service delivery), was chosen from the waiting list files. Of a pool of 250 cases, 49 completed interviews were achieved.

Study Questions: The findings from Phase I suggested several lines of inquiry, most particularly: how did the terminated families manage; what stress, if any, did they experience in assuring care and supervision of their children; what was the relative adequacy and cost of the alternate arrangements they made?

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*For purposes of claiming reimbursement, clients are mainly categorized by the Agency for Child Development as follows: AFDC Home Relief, AFDC Cash Grant, non-fee-paying , fee-paying, Child Welfare, and non-eligible.

We developed groups of study questions as follows:

1. What are the characteristics of the families who use the New York City day care program? How do those terminated from services compare with those currently enrolled and with those on the waiting list?

2. What alternate child care arrangements do terminated families use and what are their major characteristics (cost, reliability, continuity)? How satisfied are parents with these arrangements?

3. To what extent are children being left alone, and how do parents feel about this arrangement?

4. On what basis do parents make choices about working, about child care? How difficult is it to make arrangements?

5. What support systems are available to families? How do they manage their employment, homemaking and child-rearing responsibilities?

6. What relationships can be drawn between employment and child care?

Additionally, a set of working hypotheses was developed to guide the data collection and analysis.* The study hypotheses were tested and substantively and statistically significant results were incorporated into our discussion of the findings.

Data Collection

A questionnaire was developed to gather detailed information about the issues described above. Some questions were designed to gather specific data, often quantitative, on designated variables. Others were open-ended questions designed to probe the feelings and experiences of families and gather insight into how and why their choices were made.

A letter from Community Service Society was sent to all potential respondents to explain the purpose of the study and request cooperation. Then, an interviewer telephoned to ask for an appointment. Face-to-face interviews usually were conducted in the respondents' homes.

Interviewers were hired on the basis of past experience, sensitivity, and skill in eliciting information. Their varied backgrounds included many kinds of community service, such as social work, early childhood services, public administration, housing and criminal justice. The field staff was thoroughly trained and provided with detailed guides to insure reliability of the data. Interviews were conducted in Spanish, French and Chinese, as well as English.

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*These hypotheses and a summary of findings can be found in Appendix C, Working Hypotheses for Phase II.

To facilitate cooperation, each family interviewed was offered $5; only one family declined to accept payment. To enhance the staff's motivation, interviewers were paid $30 per completed interview. The field supervisor telephoned a 10% sample (a total of 20 respondents) to verify that the interview had, in fact, taken place.

In many instances, especially among the terminated group, interviewers had to use a great deal of ingenuity and persistence to locate individuals and persuade them to give of their time. To accommodate the working parents, the field staff spent many weekend and evening hours traveling to housing projects and low-income neighborhoods. When a home visit was not convenient for the respondents, interviewers arranged to meet them at their place of work, CSS, the interviewer's home or even a local coffee shop.

Data Analysis

Data on all variables were keypunched directly from pre-coded questionnaires. Computerized data analysis was then conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Statistical analysis was based mainly on frequency distributions, cross-tabulations, measures of central tendency and statistical significance tests.*

Comprehensive analysis of the open-ended questions was done by project staff. This yielded qualitative information on the feelings and experiences of families about their child care arrangements, the choices they made, the difficulties they had, the support systems they used, and the ways in which they managed their lives. This material provided insights for the interpretation of the quantitative data and illustrative case material as well.

Presentation of Findings

The data were aggregated for the total sample (n=211) and for each of the subgroups. The study findings section that follows presents data both for the total sample and for each of the subgroups, as appropriate. Where only total findings are given, this means that no significant differences were found among the groups.

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*See Appendix D, Sample Selection and Analytic Procedures, for further discussion on the statistical methods used.

> The cost of private child care was a serious hardship for the families in our study... Nineteen per cent of the children were left without supervision for part of the day. ..."I feel uneasy but what can I do? I have to work and there is no other way."

SECTION III

STUDY FINDINGS: ASPECTS OF THE STRUGGLE OF WORKING POOR FAMILIES TO SECURE CARE FOR THEIR CHILDREN

A. Characteristics of the Families Studied

The families in this study were a cross-section of families who had been linked to the New York City day care program. All had, at one time or another, been deemed eligible for service.

Terminated Group: Their children had been enrolled in day care but were no longer attending.

Enrolled Group: Their children were attending at the time of the interview.

Waiting List Group: Their children were on an eligible list waiting for slots to open in public day care.

The typical parent we interviewed was female, single, poor, Black or Hispanic, working, and struggling to "make it." She may have been on public assistance at one time, but was making a valiant attempt to be self-sufficient and self-supporting. She had found a job as a clerk, secretary, keypunch operator, lab technician, nurse, garment worker or maintenance worker. She and her children were living in an apartment that was too small for their needs, often sharing these quarters with her parents or other relatives. There was not enough money to go around, and few close friends nearby. She felt very vulnerable. Indeed, she is.

Here are several families that were interviewed. A statistical profile of the entire sample follows these typical case descriptions.

Mrs. H

> Mrs. H., a mother of two children, is now on public assistance. She had been working when she was in the public day care program, first entering day care when she was still in a training program. Because the transportation that she had been using was no longer available, Mrs. H. requested a transfer to a day care center closer to home. After eight months of waiting, it became clear that there was not going to be a transfer, so she terminated from the public day care center and made private arrangements. The alternate arrangements turned out to be very unreliable, causing

her to lose her job because of attendance problems, and forcing her to return to public assistance. Mrs. H. is under a great deal of emotional and financial stress, and is looking for another job. To date, however, she has been unable to find reliable, adequate child care arrangements that would enable her to work.

Mr. and Mrs. D

Mr. and Mrs. D. are from the Dominican Republic. They have three children at home -- 4, 8 and 14 -- and one in the Dominican Republic. Mr. D. is incapacitated. Mrs. D. had been working and her children were in public day care, but the eight-year-old was terminated when he reached school age. She has applied for day care for the youngest child, but is still on the waiting list. Her husband is hospitalized, and they are trying to make it on unemployment and disability benefits. Mrs. D. hopes that when her husband comes home he will be able to watch the children while she looks for work. Right now she has her hands full taking care of the three children and trying to make ends meet. There is no one available to help her with child care.

Mrs. N.

Mrs. N. is separated from her husband. She and three of her four children are living in one room, which they rent from a family. She pays $120 a month for this room -- over one-third of her gross income. Two of the children have special problems, one a learning disability and the other a chronic health problem. In addition, all of the children have been under an emotional strain since they were deserted by their father. Mrs. N. began working before her husband left. At that time the children were in public day care, but they were terminated because of Mrs. N's failure to show up for the recertification appointment (she was not able to take the time off from work). She then had to make other arrangements. The six-year-old child stays alone after school. The two-year-old is taken by her mother to a babysitter at 8:30 in the morning and is picked up at 6:30. The one-year-old stays with a neighbor downstairs. The infant is living with Mrs. N.'s mother. In all, Mrs. N. pays $50 a week for child care, which leaves almost no income for basic needs like food. Mrs. N. would like very much to be able to have public day care, to have an apartment of her own, and to have her youngest child back with the family.

Mrs. W.

Mrs. W. is a widow with two children, a one-year-old and a three-year-old. She and the children have been under a great deal of emotional stress since her husband died. She has no friends in the neighborhood, and the only relatives nearby are her mother and sister. Right now Mrs. W. is on public assistance, but she would like to have day care so that she can find a job. Mrs. W. also feels that day care will be good for the children -- they will have other children to play with and will learn. She is on the waiting list for public day care, and has been unable to find private child care. Her mother works, and her sister is busy with her own children, so they are unable to help with child care. She does not know where else to turn.

Demographic Characteristics of the study sample (n = 211)

The respondents were, on the whole:

Female: 94% of the primary caretakers were women.

Black and Hispanic:

64.6% were Black

29.7% were Hispanic (15.8% Puerto Rican and 13.9% other)

4.8% were White

1% were Asian American

In their twenties and thirties:

43.8% were between 20 and 29 years old; 37.6% between 30 and 35; and 18.1% over 35

Only one teenage parent was found in the sample.

Single: 70% were not married

31% were never married

12% were divorced,

25% were separated

2% were widowed

Poor and low income:

The mean income was $9255 a year; the median $7830.

More than one-quarter of the families had incomes under $6000 a year; more than three-quarters had incomes below $12,000 a year; and almost 90% earned less than $15,000 a year.

29% were on public assistance; over half (51%) had received public assistance at some time.

In the labor force:

56% of the respondents were employed at the time of the interview; 15% were looking for work, a total of 71% labor force participation among the study sample. Almost all (95%) of the respondents had worked since the birth of their first child.

The main family characteristics were:

- Average family size of 2.9 persons
- Average of 1.9 children under 14 years, whose mean/median age was 6.1 years; 45.2% preschool-age; 54.8% school-age
- Almost no teenage or adult children: only 19 families had children between 15 and 21, and none had children over 21.*

Virtually all (97.1%) of the respondents were the natural parents. Five were grandparents with primary caretaking responsibility; one was a stepparent, one a foster parent, and four were other relatives.

The families were renters: 90% rented their homes or apartments. About 30% lived in public housing projects, 25% in private apartment buildings, and the rest in private homes or small multi-family dwellings.

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*Appendix E, Demographic Characteristics of the Sample, contains tables with details of the sample's characteristics, broken down by group.

The following data are offered to give some idea of how the CSS study sample compares with the larger New York City population. Comparisons with other families in the City's public day care program are found in Appendix D.

Close to one third (29.4%) of all New York City families were headed by women in 1976. Over 50% of these female-headed families in New York City were receiving public assistance in 1978.

The ethnic breakdown of the city's population is 24% Black, 19.9% Hispanic, 3.2% Asian and other, and 51.9% White, according to the 1980 Census.

In 1978, mean family income in New York City was $15,796; median family income was $12,168. These figures are well above those for our sample.

Group Differences

Personal and family characteristics of the terminated group and the comparison groups differed across four major variables: marital status, income, employment status, and racial/ethnic characteristics. There were no significant differences on the other demographic variables measured.

Marital Status and Income: The terminated group had a significantly ($p < .01$) higher proportion of respondents who were married and living together, as well as a higher income level. Over 48% of the terminated families were headed by two parents living together, contrasted with 15% of the enrolled group and 12% of the waiting list group.

Mean and median incomes were reported as follows:

Group	Mean	Median
Terminated	$10,869	$9,596
Enrolled	8,382	7,680
Waiting List	7,057	6,006

Clearly, these findings are related to each other. Twenty percent of the women in the terminated group had married or remarried between the time they left public day care and the time they were re-interviewed. This conversion to a two-parent family tends to increase family income* for two reasons: 1) many two-parent families are two-income familiies (about 58% of the sample had both parents working); and 2) male salaries are higher than females'.**

Employment: The terminated group had a much lower ($p < .01$) proportion of employed respondents than the enrolled group: 51.5% as compared with 72.9%. This was consistent with findings from Phase I, which indicated that parents who were not employed were more likely to terminate or be terminated from the public day care program, either because of a personal decision to stay home or because of eligibility policies that give priority to those who are employed.

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*In 1979, for example, the year we conducted our interviews, the income of female-headed households was only 40% of male-headed ($22,200 vs. $8,900). Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey, March, 1979.

**Women earn, on the average, about two-thirds of what men earn.

Racial/Ethnic Characteristics: Percentages of Blacks and Hispanics in each group follow; note that Whites formed less than 5% of the interview sample.

Table 1

PERCENTAGES OF BLACKS AND HISPANICS BY GROUP

	% of Total Study Sample	% Terminated	% Enrolled	% on Waiting List
Blacks	64.6	70.5	66.1	50
Hispanics	29.7	24.5	27.1	43.8

The greater proportion of Blacks compared to Hispanics enrolled in public day care reflects the fact that among mothers of small children, Blacks are more likely to be working (60%) compared to Hispanics (44%), and the public day care program gives priority to the employed.

The most significant ethnic difference revealed by our data is that the proportion of Hispanics on the waiting list is much higher than the proportions enrolled or terminated. This may be a function of geographic distribution of services, that is, a higher density of day care centers in mainly Black neighborhoods as compared to mainly Hispanic neighborhoods. It may also reflect recent increases in the Hispanic population in New York City or language barriers encountered by Spanish-speaking clients in attempting to gain admission to publicly-funded day care services.*

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*A recent study by the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund ("Access to Training Programs," 1981) found that the language barrier was one of the major obstacles to Hispanic clients seeking public services.

Discussion

This study focused on families who are among the most vulnerable segment of the population -- those who are working poor, single, minority, and headed by women. Most of the women who had succeeded in obtaining public day care and finding a job were beginning to pull themselves out of poverty. But with each setback -- the loss of public day care, cutbacks in other services, the threat of being laid off, a rent increase, a child's illness -- they again wondered: "Will I make it?"

Many who had not gained admission to public day care programs were at a loss to find alternatives and often felt helpless. One interviewer reported: "Everyone pleaded, 'Can't you please help me?' "

According to 1978 figures from the Bureau of the Census on families with children, nearly half of Black families and a quarter of Hispanic families were female-headed; this was true for only one-seventh of White families. Black and Hispanic single-parent families are more likely to be living below the poverty level, because the mothers are younger, have less formal education and have more young children who require greater care*

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*A greater proportion of Black working mothers has existed historically. As early as 1926 the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor acknowledged the financial necessity of Black women to work during most of their adult lives and noted that marriage rarely allowed departure from the labor market. Until the mid 1970's between 12 and 14% more Black wives than White worked. As of 1980, the percentage was still 11% higher.

However, only one teenaged parent was found in our sample, reflecting the probability that such young parents may prefer to remain at home while their children are so young. Even if they wish to work, few find jobs because their marketable skills are quite low. Further, hardly any public day care exists for infants -- group care was closed down as a result of the City's fiscal crisis. Only family day care remains.

The sections that follow depict the struggle to survive -- to make adequate child care arrangements; to find and keep a job; to juggle home management, child-rearing and employment; to cope financially and emoticnally.

B. Making Choices

It is striking that only 58% of the families we interviewed were using child care on a regular basis. This seemed very low to us, in view of the fact that a large majority of the parents were attached to the labor force or in school, and that one-third of the sample was selected from persons currently enrolled in public day care. Analysis of the data showed that almost 20% of the parents who were employed had made no arrangements for the care of their children, nor had 65% of those who were looking for work.* Why and how do parents decide to seek child care? How do they go about looking and what barriers do they encounter? On what basis do they make their selection? How do the parents without regular care manage? These are the issues discussed in this section.

The Decision to Seek Care

Overwhelmingly, parents sought child care because they needed employment. At the time they first applied for public day care, over 70% were either working (49%) or looking for work (21%), and most of the rest were attending school. Only nine persons said that they sought day care because of the needs of the child.

The decision to seek employment almost always preceded the search for child care. Nearly 80% of those interviewed said that they were actively seeking child care -- mainly for employment reasons -- when they first applied for public day care. However, in a sizeable minority of cases (20%), the availability of day care triggered the decision to enter the labor market.

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*See Subsection C, "Children Left Alone," for further discussion of this issue.

As we noted, only 58% of our sample had regular child care arrangements. Among the remainder, some (13.2% of the sample) were still actively searching for care. The balance said they did not have a need for care, mainly because at that point in time they were neither working nor actively looking for work. While we were not able to determine to what extent the latter group was influenced in their decision to leave the labor force by the difficulties encountered in finding adequate and affordable child care, we do know that the availability of good quality, affordable child care can be an important factor in a mother's decision to work or not.[1]

Looking for Care

Word-of-mouth was by far the most frequent method of locating child care. Over 80% of those who sought child care -- both those who found it and those who did not -- first contacted friends, neighbors, and relatives. Similarly, word-of-mouth accounted for 48% of the responses to the question: "Where did you first hear about the public day care program?"

Only a handful of respondents turned to public or community agencies. A few said that they looked at advertisements in newspapers.

Many parents looked everywhere they could think of, such as the two women described here.

Mrs. B.

Mrs. B, a mother of two preschool children, is now receiving public assistance, but she has worked in the past, and would very much like to work again and not be dependent on welfare. In order to do this she needs to find adequate child care arrangements. Mrs. N. has applied for public day care twice, and both times was placed on the waiting list because there was no available space. She tells of looking for alternate child care arrangements. First she contacted a privately-funded infant child care center in her neighborhood--they charged $80 a week for each child. She contacted other private providers of child care--they asked $15 a day per child and more. She would ask her mother for help, but her mother is in school. She asked friends, but they all have their own children and most of them are working too. Her grandmother is much too old to take care of young children and Mrs. B. has no close neighbors. Mrs. B. is at the end of her rope and has despaired of ever being able to resolve her child care problem so that she can work instead of relying on public assistance.

Mrs L.

> Mrs. L. has two children, ages five and ten. She was terminated from public day care and looked for months for someone to watch the children while she works. She put up a notice in her building lobby, asked neighbors, and inquired in private schools. Everything she has found has been too far away, too expensive, or both. She has no friends or relatives in the neighborhood. Determined not to go back on public assistance, Mrs. L. has sent the children to live with their father, from whom she is divorced.

These families are typical of others in the study. Over 40% of the respondents who had succeeded in finding care had searched for a month or more, and 27% had looked for more than two months. Among those who hadn't found child care, half were still seeking care at the time of the interview. Two-thirds of this group had been looking for more than two months.

Barriers

One woman called the search for child care "hideous." The majority (60%) said it had been somewhat or very difficult to make child care arrangements. Caregivers were simply not available, were hard to find, or were not considered acceptable by the parent. A number of parents said that they wanted public day care only, and this was not available to them. One mother said: "Lots of people take your money, but they don't take care of your children."

Cost was another major barrier, the most commonly mentioned reason given by those (39%) who had been unsuccessful in the child care search. Some had special difficulties, such as their own incapacity or illness or the special needs of the children.

Of those who did not experience difficulty, 41% said that it was because they had neighbors, friends or relatives who help. An additional 30% said that finding child care was relatively easy because public day care was available to them. Some said that things became easier when the child entered school and child care wasn't needed all day; others simply considered themselves lucky.

Selecting Child Care

The overwhelming majority (85%) of respondents said that, at the time they first applied for public day care, it was their first choice. Those who were enrolled in public day care at the time of the interview almost unanimously reaffirmed that choice.

Parents selected child care by the same criteria they used to evaluate it: convenience, cost, opportunity for the children to learn and to socialize with other children.

Discussion

Since parents view child care -- both public and private -- as a support that enables them to work, the primary considerations are: Is it available? Is it convenient? Can I afford it?

Certainly, parents were also concerned that their children have good quality care, that they learn, and that they have the opportunity to play with other children. For these reasons, their first preference was the public day care program. But when public day care was not available, and needed income was at stake, arrangements for the care of the children had to be made, even though they were not ideal.

Some parents, having despaired of finding adequate child care that they could afford, made the decision to leave the children alone. This is discussed in the next section.

C. Children Left Alone

The problems of "latchkey" children -- boys and girls who come home from school to an empty house -- merit special attention. As the number of working women increases, so does the problem of children left without adult supervision. This phenomenon was not only commonplace among the families in the study sample, but is now widespread enough to have received national attention.[2]

Since most parents are extremely reluctant to leave their children or to admit to having resorted to this solution, we realized the difficulty of obtaining reliable data on this subject. Nevertheless, we endeavored to find out, for this sample, the numbers of children being left alone, the number of hours they were alone, their ages, how and why the parents made this decision, and their feelings about this arrangement. The findings are presented in this section.

Numbers

When asked whether they leave their children alone, 9% of the respondents said they did so on a regular basis, and 10.2% did so occasionally. Of these parents, three-quarters left their children alone for between one and three hours, and close to a fifth of the parents left their children unsupervised for between four and eight hours.

Ages

The median age of the children when first left alone was 9.8 years; almost one-quarter had been left alone beginning at age 7 or younger, and 10% at age 3 or younger. By the time they were 12, 95% of the children stayed by themselves. Families who had children enrolled in public day care were less likely to leave their children alone: 13.6% of the terminated group said they left their children alone on a regular basis, compared with only 5.6% of the enrolled group.

When asked whether any of their children under 14 had responsibility for looking after their younger brothers and sisters, almost 30% said "yes." The seeming contradiction between the 30% and 19% figures comes about because, in many cases, parents who have, say, a ten-year-old watching a preschooler, often do not consider this to be "leaving the children alone." The children assumed this responsibility at a median age of 10.6 years, and some cared for siblings as young as one year.

Underreporting

We know that these data are underreported.

Of those who were employed, almost 20% had made no arrangements for the care of their children. Among those who were looking for work, 65% had made no arrangements for the care of their children. By analyzing number of hours of care and comparing that to the number of hours of employment, we can estimate that an additional one-third of the children were left without coverage for some period of time.

Therefore it would appear that more than half of the children in this study were regularly or occasionally left without supervision for part of the day, while their parents worked.

Making the Decision

It was clear from the interviews that those parents who made the decision to leave the children alone did so with trepidation, ambivalence and uncertainty.

When asked: "How did you make the decision to leave the children alone -- what factors did you consider?," 35% responded: "I felt the child was old enough." Further probing revealed that it was not that simple, that many factors were taken into account: the age of the child and the level of the child's maturity, the mother's need to work vs. the availability and cost of child care, whether there was someone to "look in on" the child. Sometimes (24% of those responding) the child initiated the request saying "day care is too babyish" or "I'm old enough to stay alone now.". Mrs. M.'s story is a typical one:

> Mrs. M. has a seven-year-old and an eleven-year-old. She was terminated from public day care because she was not working (she was in school). After finding a job, she reapplied and was told her income was too high. She looked for over two months for alternate arrangements, but was not able to find anything. Previous sitters that she has had were very unreliable. In the meantime, the children were pressing to be allowed to stay by themselves. Mrs. M. knows her children are responsible, and she is proud of their

> independence, but she worries a lot about their safety while she is at work: "Something could happen to them."

Parents' Feelings

Despite the parents' expressions of confidence in the fact that the children were old enough and responsible enough to be left alone, it was clear that there was a great deal of ambivalence, concern, and outright dissatisfaction with this arrangement.

More than 46% of the respondents who said that they left their children alone were not satisfied with this arrangement. They were worried about the children's safety, concerned about their being confined to the house, and generally believed that the children would be much better off in an organized program. Even some who said that they were satisfied expressed concern for the adequacy of this arrangement. Some typical comments were:

> [From a father] "I think my oldest boy is having behavior problems because there's no one home to supervise him."
>
> "There's no way to check on my boy after school, where he goes or when he comes home. I worry all the time that my boy is okay. It interferes with my work."
>
> "I feel uneasy, but what can I do? I have to work and there is no other way."
>
> "I started leaving J. alone when he was six years old. I felt he was too young to come home from school alone. I was especially afraid when he got out early, but I lost public day care, and I couldn't find anything else."
>
> "V. [age 9] is very independent. She asked me if she could stay home and watch her little brother

> [age 7]. But I wish I didn't have to leave them alone."
>
> "I don't like this arrangement at all. But I lost day care and I don't want to go back on public assistance."
>
> "The babysitters are unreliable -- they don't do what they're supposed to do. So I left the children alone."
>
> "I don't feel comfortable knowing they're here alone and knowing that something may happen."
>
> "We were lucky to get B. into a Catholic school that keeps him until 5 o'clock. My husband and I feel he needs someone to look after him when he comes home, but we couldn't find anything we can afford."
>
> "The oldest is very responsible. He stays in one room and watches TV."

Preferences

Almost all the parents expressed a preference for some alternative. Most wanted a structured program where their school-age children could get some supervision, help with their homework, and an opportunity for recreation with other children. It should be noted that these are parents who had already sought out public day care as the optimal choice for their children.

Discussion

This study has revealed that there are large numbers of "latchkey" children, coming home after school either to sit by the television or to roam the streets. The parents' attitudes about this are ambivalent: on the one hand they are clearly proud of their children's independence; on the other, they experience worry and guilt. It was clear, however, that given the availability of good quality, inexpensive supervised care, many -- probably most -- of these parents would choose this as an alternative to leaving the children alone. Most parents did not view the publicly funded centers as they are now structured as a good alternative for school-age children: either the centers were filled, were too far from home, or had programs that were not suitable to the older children.

Long a concern of the social welfare field, the issue of children being left alone while their parents work demands a great deal more scrutiny by public policy planners. Relatively few studies have been mounted to document the extent and nature of this phenomenon and its impact on the lives of children and their families.

A ground-breaking study in 1969 study by Florence Ruderman for the Child Welfare League of America found that large numbers of children cared for themselves part of the time while their mothers worked.[5] The author estimated that 20% of the children of working mothers aged nine to eleven were alone for varying periods during the day. She stated that 36% were left for one hour and 43% were left for up to two hours, a very considerable amount of time in light of the safety needs of a child. Fifty-two percent of the mothers who reported using this arrangement were dissatisfied with it, a finding very similar to the that of CSS study.

In the mid 70's, the U.S. Census sought to find out who cares for the children of working mothers.[4] Forty-three percent of all children in that study between the ages of three and thirteen had working mothers. Among mothers employed full time, about 18% of their older children (seven to thirteen) cared for themselves while their mothers worked, while virtually none of the younger children (three to six) were left alone. The first finding is remarkably close to the 19% figure reported by the CSS sample.

Income levels only slightly affected the type of care a child received while the mother was employed. Low-income families, classified by the Census Bureau as having incomes below $10,000, were as likely to use a day care center or home care as those with higher incomes. It is interesting to note that a higher percentage of families with incomes of over $15,000 reported children aged seven to thirteen caring for themselves while their mothers worked.

The impact of these findings is not clear. Some experts believe that lack of proper supervision and isolation can lead to psychological problems or to crime, but this has not been definitively documented.[3] Clearly, we need to know more about the possible impact on these young people, their families and on society as a whole.

D. Characteristics of Private Care Arrangements

Families in our study who lost public day care services or who failed to gain access generally made alternate arrangements for the care of their children, usually with friends, neighbors or relatives. In the main, these arrangements were only custodial, and they were often costly, discontinuous and unreliable. In this section, we focus on the important characteristics of these private child care arrangements. Comparisons are made, where relevant, between public and private care.

Type of Arrangements

Of the 58% of our total sample who used child care, 52% employed private care only; 35.7% used public day care only, and 12.2% used public day care supplemented by private child care.

Among private child care users, care in someone else's home was the most frequent form of care, accounting for 55.1% of the children and 62.8% of the families. A member of the household cared for 29.2% of the children in 33.3% of the families. Only six respondents said that they had someone coming into their home to care for their child(ren). Just three were using a private nursery school, and two a Head Start center. Table 2 depicts the frequency with which the different types of care were used.

Table 2

TYPE OF ALTERNATE CARE USED

Type	Number[a]	% Responses[b]	% Cases
Member of household	26	29.2	33.3
Someone coming into the home	6	6.7	7.7
Care in someone else's home	49	55.1	62.8
Nursery school or private group care	3	3.4	3.8
Head Start	2	2.2	2.6
Recreational Program	1	1.1	1.3
	n=89		

[a] Number of cases = 78
[b] Multiple response permitted

We had expected that younger parents would be more likely to rely on family members within the home than older ones. The opposite proved to be true: younger parents in the study were more inclined to use and to prefer public day care. As the children got older, the parents were more inclined to seek out alternative forms of care or to leave the children by themselves. Additionally, older parents were more likely to have higher incomes, which made them ineligible for public day care.

Description of Arrangements

In almost all instances, the private care being given was unlicensed and took place in someone's home.* Besides custodial care, few, if any, other services were included. Even food was usually (80% of the cases) provided by the parent. Only one-quarter of the private child care users reported that care included regular playtime or recreation. A few said that the caregiver helped the children with learning. None had child care that included housekeeping services.

These two arrangements were typical:

> A married couple with a one-year-old child consider themselves fortunate to have a neighbor downstairs who has agreed to take

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*New York City's Health Code, which establishes the standards for day care, requires facilities, including homes, to be licensed as group day care if six or more children are served. The standards set forth strict rules for staffing and physical settings.

> care of the child for them. The mother arrives at the neighbor's at 8 A.M. with clothes, diapers, juice and milk. They pay $40 per week ($2,080 per year) for this care, even though the family's gross income is only a little over $12,000 a year. The mother is concerned that there is not enough space for the baby and too few toys or playthings. She is on the waiting list for public day care.
>
> A brother and sister walk to a sitter's house after school at 3 o'clock and stay until their mother picks them up on her way home from work at about 6 o'clock. The mother gives the sitter food for the children. In total, the mother spends an hour and a half traveling to and from the sitter and pays $50 a week for child care. She had her children in public day care, but they were terminated because she was not able to show up for the recertification appointment; she has since reapplied.

In contrast to these arrangements, public day care programs generally provide education, recreation, food, and access to health and social services, as well as supervision.

Caregiver Qualities

The majority of the private caregivers were relatives (33.3%), neighbors (18.9%), friends (17.8%), or immediate family (12.2%). Less than 18% were persons not well known to the user. On the average, parents had known the caregivers more than four years.

When asked to rate the individuals who were caring for, or who had cared for, their children, over 90% of the users of both public and private care said that they considered them to be "very caring and loving," or "warm and friendly." No significant differences were noted between public and private caregivers or among the three study groups.

Table 3

USER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH CAREGIVER

Relationship	Number	Percent
Husband or Wife	2	2.2
Son or Daughter	9	10.0
Relative in household	17	18.9
Unrelated member of the household	---	---
Relative not in the household	13	14.4
Good friend	16	17.8
Neighbor	17	18.9
Employee of respondent	14	15.6
Employee of a program	2	2.2

n=90

Continuity of Caregiver

CSS found extensive discontinuity of care with respect to both the number of arrangements used to cover the work day and the continuity of arrangements over time. This was especially true of users of private child care, almost 30% of whom had to make multiple arrangements to cover their child care needs. On the other hand, very few public day care users needed multiple arrangements. In addition, families often had to change their arrangements. The result was that the children regularly had to relate to a variety of caregivers.

Multiple Arrangements: Almost 30% of those with child care used multiple arrangements. About one quarter of the children required more than one caregiver on a regular basis, and some had as many as two or three. If we take into account the parent(s) and schoolteachers, as well as the other caregivers, we find that many children in our study were cared for by a multiplicity of adults on a regular basis. A typical arrangement:

> Ms. S. is a single working woman with two children, one four years old and one nine years old. The older child attends school six hours a day and then comes home. The younger one is with the respondent's brother from morning until 12:30, at which time a girl friend comes in and stays until 7 o'clock to watch the younger child and to be there when the older child comes home from school.

Public day care enrollees fared far better in this regard than those terminated or on the waiting list. Only 7% of the parents whose children were in public day care needed more than one arrangement, and only nine (or about 11%) of the enrolled children were receiving supplemental care. In almost all instances where public day care users needed supplemental care, it was because care was needed for more hours than the day care program was able to provide; in the other cases it was usually because one or more of the children was too old or too young for public day care.

Change in Arrangements: Families changed their child care arrangements approximately every two years, and many had to make changes more often. During the year and a half preceding our study, almost 20% had changed at least twice, and over 9% had changed three or more times. The reasons were varied: they had been terminated from public day care, a babysitter quit, a grandmother decided to go back to work, the caregiver moved, the mother was dissatisfied with the care she was getting, a parent was out of work for a while, or a friend decided she was tired of helping out.

Table 3 shows the number of changes by group, for a one-and-a-half year period (the time during which all families in the study had some contact with the public day care program), and a five-year period. Although there was a small but significant ($p < .05$) difference between the terminated group and the other two groups, with the former changing their arrangements somewhat more often, there was no significant difference between users of public and private care. This was contrary to expectations. We had anticipated that public day care would provide more continuity over time. However, information gathered by CSS indicates that changes in eligibility policy and procedures contributed to public day care turnover.

There was a direct relationship between the number of preschool children and the number of times parents had to change their child care arrangements. Over 65% of the families with no preschool children said that they did not change their child care arrangements during the year and one-half prior to the interview; on the other hand, only 41% of the families with more than one preschool child sustained a single arrangement during this period.

Reliability

Parents, especially working parents, have to be able to count on their child care arrangements being available. The parents we interviewed reported that often this was not the case. In fact, their normal child care arrangements broke down with some regularity.

When asked how many times during the past four weeks it was not possible to rely on their normal arrangements, 45.8% said that they had experienced one or more breakdowns. The mean for all families was about one-and one-half times per month.

Table 4

CONTINUITY OF CARE OVER TIME

Number of Changes During One-and-a-Half Years

	All		Terminated		Enrolled		Waiting List	
Number	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
0	111	56.6	50	52.6	36	61.0	25	59.5
1	48	24.5	24	25.3	17	28.8	7	16.7
2	19	9.7	13	13.7	1	1.7	5	11.9
3	7	3.6	3	3.2	2	3.4	2	4.8
4	5	2.6	3	3.2	1	1.7	1	2.4
5	1	0.5	----		1	1.7	----	
6 or more	5	2.5	2	2.2	1	1.7	2	4.8
	n=196		n=95		n=59		n=42	
	Mean=0.84		Mean=0.89		Mean=0.68		Mean=0.93	
	Median=0.4		Median=0.5		Median=0.3		Median=0.3	

Number of Changes during Five Years

	All		Terminated		Enrolled		Waiting List	
Number	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
0	25	13.8	6	7.3	9	15.5	10	24.4
1	58	32.0	26	31.7	19	32.8	13	31.7
2	48	26.5	22	26.8	17	29.3	9	22.0
3	23	12.7	13	15.9	6	10.3	4	9.8
4	11	6.1	7	8.5	2	3.4	2	4.9
5	5	2.8	2	2.4	2	3.4	1	2.4
6	3	1.7	1	1.2	1	1.7	1	2.4
7-9	2	1.2	1	1.2	1	1.7	---	
10-12	3	1.7	1	1.2	1	1.7	1	2.4
13-15	2	1.2	2	2.4	---		---	
20	1	0.6	1	1.2	---		---	
	n=181		n=82		n=59		n=41	
	Mean=2.23		Mean=2.68		Mean=1.93		Mean=1.76	
	Median=1.7		Median=1.9		Median=1.6		Median=1.3	

Explaining breakdowns in their child care, about half of the parents using private care said that it was due to the unavailability of the caregiver; about the same proportion of the enrolled group said that it was because the day care center was closed.* An additional one-third of the enrolled group said that they had not been able to use the day care program because of their child's illness; in contrast, only two persons in the other two groups said that the child's illness had caused their regular child care arrangements to be unavailable. Some examples follow:

> "Three times during the past four weeks, the sitters were not available. One time, my brother -- he watches the baby -- had other business and he didn't show up. Twice my girl friend 'got tired' and said she couldn't watch the children. Each time, I had to stay home from work. And my girl friend says she's not sure how much longer she's going to be able to watch the kids."

> "I'm looking for a job. When I have to go for an interview, my mother minds the children and I pay her for it. I know my mother takes good care of the children, but she is sickly and I can't depend on her. Twice this month I had to stay home because my mother had to go to the clinic."

In only 38% of the cases were the parents able to make alternate arrangements when their regular child care was not available. Usually, they either had to stay home from work (45.5%), or take the child with them (9.1%).

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*Note that Martin Luther King Day fell during the time period in question; a day when some day care centers were closed and many places of employment were not. This affected our study figures. Normally, one would expect public day care to be more reliable than private child care.

Astoundingly, in spite of the frequency with which their child care arrangements were not available, and the impact that this had on their employment, 97% of the respondents said that, in general, they considered their child care arrangements to be usually reliable or very reliable.

Coverage

All but ten of the children received care five days a week. The daily number of hours were reported as follows:

Less than 8: 56.4%
8 - 10: 34.8%
More than 10: 8.8%

Close to 19% of the parents did not have their total need for care met. Those receiving public day care services were better off in this regard than the others: 11.9% of the enrolled group reported inadequate coverage compared with 26% of the other groups.

Convenience

Who escorts the children to the child care site? What happens if this person is not available? How much time is spent traveling back and forth?

Not surprisingly, the respondent, almost always the mother, was the one who generally took the child(ren) to their care arrangements. Other regular escorts include husbands, other family or household members, friends or relatives.

We observed some differences between public and private care and noted that the enrolled group fared better, namely: (1) only one parent using public day care reported that her child went alone to the center, compared with nine cases (28%) from the group using private care; (2) 10 respondents from the enrolled group (17%) reported that a day care employee escorted the children,* as contrasted with only 2 from the groups using private child care, and (3) more than half (52.5%) of the mothers in the enrolled group had made arrangements with a family member to escort the child when they were unable to do so, but only one quarter of the other two groups had done this.

On the average, about 25 minutes a day was spent traveling back and forth to child care -- the median was 20 minutes. 20% spent more than half an hour, and 10% an hour or more. There was no significant difference in this regard between public and private care; however, there was a significant ($p < .01$) difference in the mean time between the terminated group and the other two groups (17 minutes for the terminated group, 27 for the enrolled group and 26 for the waiting list group). The reason for this difference is unclear to us.

Cost

As expected, private care was substantially more expensive than public day care. The high cost of private care was a major barrier to those seeking to make arrangements and presented a real hardship to those who had to pay high fees to caregivers.

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*It is ACD policy that a center staff member picks up children enrolled in after-school programs and escorts them to the center.

Only 40% of the enrolled group paid a fee to the public day care program; in contrast, 68.4% of the terminated group and a striking 95.7% of the waiting list group paid for their care. Among those who paid, the average fee paid to the public day care program was $8.75 a week; to private caregivers it was $31.27, an average difference of $1,171.04 over the course of a year.

With a median gross weekly income of $151 a week (mean $179), and fixed weekly expenses of $136 excluding child care,* it is clear that the cost of private child care presents a very real burden to these working parents.

Table 5 delineates the fees paid for child care by the three groups. Note that the waiting list group paid the most for their child care.

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*See Section F, "Managing Work and Family Responsibilities."

Table 5

COST OF PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE CARE

Total Weekly Fee Paid

Fee-Paying Families

Fee	Terminated	Enrolled		Waiting List	All(%)
		Public Day Care	Total Fees Paid*		
1-5	---	29.2	26.9	---	9.7
6-10	7.7	37.5	26.9	---	12.5
11-15	3.8	16.6	15.4	---	6.9
16-20	34.6	12.5	15.4	5.0	20.8
21-30	19.2	4.2	7.7	40.0	19.4
31-40	19.2	---	3.8	30.0	16.7
41-50	3.8	---	---	15.0	5.6
Over 50	11.5	---	3.8	10.0	8.3
	n=26	n=24	n=26	n=20	n=72
Mean	$29.62	$ 8.75	$13.38	$36.10	$25.55
Median	$21.25	$ 4.67	$ 9.00	$32.00	$20.00

Mean Private Care: $31.27

Mean Public Care: $ 8.75

*Total weekly fees paid for public day care and needed supplemental care.

Discussion

Public day care was found to be clearly superior to private day care in terms of:

- continuity
- coverage
- cost
- range of services provided.

Additionally, if we discount the unusual circumstance of centers closing on Martin Luther King Day during the period we conducted interviews, public day care is also more reliable than private. These findings have important implications for parents, children, employers, and society as a whole.

Lack of continuity of caregiver, for example, has been documented as being undesirable for a child's development, and potentially harmful.[6] At worst, having too many caregivers can cause disruption in a young child's development, such as impaired social relationships, emotional disturbances, or learning difficulties. At least, it frequently causes feelings of anxiety and despondency.

Because many working parents could not find child care that provided adequate coverage, children were sometimes left alone from the time the sitter left till the time the parent(s) came home. Often they were either isolated in the house with the TV or roaming around the neighborhood. This has been discussed in a previous section.

The cost of private child care, averaging more than $30 a week, and often running as high as $50 or $60 a week and more, created serious hardship for the families in our study. Even working parents did not have the disposable income that would allow them to pay these fees without considerable sacrifice. For non-working parents who needed child care in order to seek employment, the costs were completely prohibitive. Virtually all families found that cost was a major barrier to making child care arrangements.

Overwhelmingly, the parents interviewed said that an opportunity for their children to learn and to socialize with other children was very important to them. That was what they liked best about public day care and what they found most lacking in private arrangements. The parents' instincts were sound. The extent to which early learning and socialization experiences enhance childrens' development has been well documented.[7]

Good nutrition is also essential to development, and is an important part of the public day care program. In most instances children in private care ate only what the parent brought for them, and nutrition education to develop good eating habits was virtually non-existent. Note also that the need to provide food effectively increases the cost of care for the parent.

A final point: generally the families who had received public day care fared somewhat better than those who had never been enrolled when it came to making alternate arrangements. This may be due to the greater access to formal and informal systems of referrals, networks and contacts that families in the public day care program develop. We can also hypothesize that once exposed to a high standard of care in the public day care centers, parents would then have higher expectations when they looked for private care on their own. Or, the differences in making alternate arrangements may be a function of family characteristics, such as age of children or income. This question merits further study.

E. Parents' Experiences with Public and Private Arrangements for Care

What kinds of experiences have the parents and the children had with their child care arrangements? In general, how satisfied were they? How did parents evaluate their child care services? What did they see as the relative merits of public vs. private arrangements? The interviewers asked probing questions designed to shed light on these issues; the results are described in this section.

Parents' Reactions

The respondents generally expressed satisfaction with their child care arrangements. Over 85% said they considered the care that they were using at the time of the interview to be good or excellent. As mentioned, a notable exception was the group that had to leave their children alone; 46% of these parents were dissatisfied with this arrangement. The waiting list group was less pleased with the care they were currently using than were the other two groups -- only 73.9% of them said they considered it good or excellent, and 26% considered it poor.

On what basis did the parents make these judgments? Analysis of the responses to questions probing the reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and about what was liked best and least, revealed the following major factors:

1. Convenience was a most important consideration for the working mothers in our sample. Over 45% of those

interviewed said this was what they liked best about the child care arrangements they were using.

2. The personal qualities of the caregiver also ranked very high as a basis for evaluating the quality of the care.

3. An opportunity for the children to learn was strongly expressed by most parents. What most parents liked best about public day care was that their children were learning. Lack of opportunity for learning was generally what they liked least about private child care.

4. The child's safety and security was often mentioned, as was a good physical environment.

Other factors parents mentioned in evaluating the quality of care included: opportunities for children to play and socialize with other children, flexibility of hours, and nutrition.

Generally, the parents seemed reluctant to express dissatisfaction with care their children were receiving. However, when asked their preference, a more reliable measure of satisfaction, the overwhelming majority of respondents using private care said that they would prefer another kind of care.

Preferences

Overwhelmingly, the parents' first preference was for structured programs such as those offered by public day care. Over 85% of all respondents said that public day care had been their first choice. Similarly, among those who were still seeking care at the time they were interviewed, 85% preferred either a public day care center (60%), a public family day care program (5%), a private day care center or nursery school (5%), or a day camp/recreational program (15%).

Significantly, in spite of the high levels of satisfaction first expressed by respondents using private child care, two-thirds would prefer to have another kind of care -- in the main (72%) public day care or Head Start. All but two of the rest would prefer another kind of structured program, such as the ones listed above. In contrast, only two of the group that was enrolled in public day care said that they would prefer another kind of care, and both of them said they would want a private day care center or nursery school.

Public vs. Private Care

Parents liked public day care mainly because it offered opportunities for their children to learn and to socialize with other children. The teachers in the public program were given high praise by many of the parents we interviewed. Also important were the extended hours of the day care program; this enabled parents to work, secure in the knowledge that their children were well taken care of for the entire day. Many mentioned as well that they liked the nutrition provided. A number of respondents said that they appreciated the low cost of the program. Some typical comments about the public day care program from parents:

> "It was structured and educational. The children had a good meal. I had a feeling of confidence that they were well cared for."
> "S. was there all day. She was fed well. She made a lot of friends."

> "There were good facilities for learning. A good medical program. The teachers helped the children. They had good food, served on schedule."

> "I like public day care because my children could not speak English and they can now. The one with speech problems speaks now also."

> "C. receives good care. He acquires learning skills. I could not work without day care."

> "H. is very happy. They take good care of her. They take her on trips in the summertime."

Overwhelmingly, what parents liked least about the public day care program was the "bureaucratic hassle", namely, having to report to their center at regular intervals to document eligibility. Parents complained about too much paper work, too much time lost from work, long waiting lines and understaffing. In addition, some respondents needed more flexible hours of service to meet their employment needs.

About the only positive characteristic reported for private arrangements was convenience. Others mentioned the personal qualities of the caregiver. In general, most users of private care just seemed to be grateful that the children were safe, clean and fed. As mentioned, parents' most frequent complaint about private arrangements was that, by and large, they did not provide learning experiences or opportunities for their children to be with other children.

Discussion

When public day care, the preferred choice, was not available, parents' most common alternative was informal, out-of-home arrangements. This is in contrast to other surveys,[8] which show that a household member, usually the husband, is the most common child care solution for working mothers. For the women in our study, most of whom were single, and almost none with children over 21, this was not an option.

Although most respondents expressed satisfaction with their arrangements, it is well known that satisfaction is almost always overstated. Parents do not wish to admit that they are leaving their children in situations with which they are not entirely happy. Further, child care is so hard to find that expectations are often low, and the parent is thankful if the child is simply safe and fed.

In contrast with the arrangements actually made and the expressed satisfaction, structured programs, such as those offered by the publicly funded services, were the preferred form of care. Since the sample was comprised of families who had already "voted with their feet" by having enrolled in or applied to a publicly funded program, no generalization can be made from these results. However, parents surveyed in other studies have expressed similar preferences for organized child care programs.[9] In the 1976 Bureau of Census report, as well as the National Child Care Consumer study, day care centers and nursery schools proved to be the most satisfactory form of child care available to the mothers surveyed.

Although Ruderman[10] believed that there was a social stigma attached to day care because it primarily served low-income families, she found that almost half of the families reported that they would use group day care if available, particularly when their children were younger. The reasons parents in our survey gave for their preference were:

- Learning opportunities
- Socialization, play, recreation
- Modest cost
- High quality of the teachers
- Safety and security, good physical environment
- Extended hours of service

The only complaints about public day care were about the "bureaucratic hassle" -- too much paper work and too much waiting time. Parents wondered, for example, why recertification could not be done by mail so that they wouldn't have to take time off from work. In some instances, they felt that staff cutbacks had affected the quality of care. Some parents asked if arrangements could not be made for children who were not feeling well to attend; others expressed a wish that the hours could be more flexible.

Over and over, the parents expressed a desire for more programs, available to all who needed them. This mother's comment summed up the feelings of most of the interviewees: "There should be more day care programs. Child care is not incorporated enough in our society so that a single mother can be comfortable. Child care is low on the scale in our society. The message you get is: 'Don't have children.'"

F. Managing Work and Family Responsibilities

The working, low-income, often single woman is an unwitting participant in the "superwoman" syndrome, juggling employment, child-rearing, homemaking, shopping, errands, and some social activities. Trying to make ends meet was a struggle for everyone interviewed. In this section we review how they managed, the difficulties that they had and where they turned for help. We also note how the experiences of the enrolled group differed from those who were not in public day care.

Difficulties

Lack of time was overwhelmingly the most common problem. These parents handled multiple responsibilities and still tried to find time for their children and for themselves. Many found themselves always late -- late for work, late for picking up the child.

The working parents were asked how difficult it was for them to handle their child caring and work responsibilities. Almost half (48%) said that it was very difficult or somewhat difficult. Even those who said it was not very difficult (34%) or easy (18%) often had an air of bravado. Fiercely proud of their hard-won independence, they told our interviewers: "I can manage," "I don't need help," "I don't want to bother anyone," "I'm okay."

Public day care was clearly providing an important support to these working mothers. The enrolled group found it significantly less difficult to manage than the other two -- only 34.9% reported having difficulty compared with 56.4% of the terminated group and 50% of the waiting list group.

"Natural" Support Systems

Extended family, relatives, friends and neighbors are of prime importance to families, especially poor, single-parent families, in coping with their child care and child-rearing responsibilities. We have already discussed the ways in which these support systems were critical to the success or failure of the child care search and to the ease with which such arrangements were made. In this subsection we examine the extent to which the families in the study had access to these "natural" support systems, and the extent to which they used them.

Relatives and Friends: Relatives and friends were a major source of help and support to the parents in the study: when they experienced difficulty in balancing their child-rearing and work responsibilities, 48% of the mothers and fathers said that it was to their relatives and friends that they turned. Relatives and friends were the most frequent providers of private child care; in addition, they commonly provided occasional or backup care, or escort service. They were also a primary source of information and assistance in the search for child care.

Unfortunately, however, many families did not have relatives and friends nearby. About 58% of those interviewed said they had no close relatives who lived nearby; some did not even have anyone in the city. Similarly, 41% of the respondents said they had no friends in the neighborhood; another 40% said they had very few. Almost 30% of those responding to the query "Where do you turn for help?" said that they had nowhere to turn.

Many of those who did have relatives and friends felt reluctant to ask them for help, not wanting to impose on individuals who were also busy with work and family responsibilities. Others claimed they did not need or want help.

Immediate Family: The large majority of the primary caretakers did not have spouses or older children to turn to for help. Those who did, however, said that their family was very helpful.

Among those who were married at the time of the interview, (only 30%), about half* said that their spouse actively participated in child-rearing and in decisions about child care and another 20% said that their spouse sometimes participated. Husbands or wives participated by: playing and talking with the children, taking them on outings, cooking, dressing the children, and generally "helping out."

Only 19 families had teenage children; none had children over 21. Those with older children said that they often helped look after their younger brothers and sisters.

Although spouses and older children helped out, rarely were they regular providers of child care, nor was escort service to and from the child care arrangement normally their responsibility. The reason for this is that, by and large, these other household members were employed (60%), with consequent limited availability for help with child care and child-rearing.

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*This includes some separated or divorced spouses who were still very involved with their children.

Other Household Members: About 20% of the households contained adults other than the respondent and his/her spouse. Most (51%) were the child's grandparents; the rest were aunts, uncles, or other relatives.

These other family members were an important source of support to the primary caretaker. They often provided regular child care (the second most common type of private care used,) and occasional care (all but a few helped look after the children with varying degrees of frequency). In addition, they sometimes helped by escorting the child to and from the child care arrangements and in other ways. However, these household members, too, were usually employed and thus were not always available.

Agencies

All of the families in the survey had either applied for or received publicly funded day care, and a considerable portion had received public assistance, food stamps, Medicaid, public housing, and other publicly subsidized services. Nevertheless, only a handful mentioned any city, state or federal agency as a resource. Nor were private or community agencies seen as a major source of help and support.

Ethnic Differences

Black and Puerto Rican parents were more likely to have another family member living in the home, whereas White families were more likely to have relatives, friends and neighbors to turn to.

Over one quarter of Black and Puerto Rican respondents had another adult -- usually a parent or other family member -- living in the home, compared with 8% of Whites.

On the other hand, when asked where they usually turned for help, only 8% of Black and Puerto Rican families said they turned to relatives or friends, compared with one-third of Whites. Similarly, 46% of Puerto Rican respondents and 39% of Blacks said they had "almost no" friends in the neighborhood, contrasted with 25% of Whites.

Paid Household Services

Virtually none of the respondents was able to hire outside help, to assist with household chores or to purchase additional services to ease their workload. An examination of the financial situation of the families interviewed, which follows, makes it clear that buying services is not a feasible alternative for this population.

Managing Financially

Almost all (90%) of the respondents said that they were having difficulty managing financially. A brief look at family income and expenses explains why.

The median gross monthly income from all sources was $653; the mean $771. Estimates of fixed average monthly expenses are as follows:*

- $200 for rent
- $50 for utilities
- $200 for food

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*Sources: Rent, utilities, food and child care data are from interviews; carfare based on $1.50 a day; tax estimates from Federal, State and City tax withholding tables.

- $110 for child care
- $30 for carfare
- $105 for taxes.

This leaves an average of $76 monthly for clothing, schoolbooks, repairs, incidentals, and everything else.

How do they make do? At a minimum, families had cut out or cut down on everything except the bare necessities. They had virtually given up all recreation, entertainment and vacation trips. All expenditures that could be postponed were, including furniture, household goods, and repairs. Most families said that they bought little or no new clothing. Some even had to cut down on food, medicine and other essentials.

But for many even this was not enough. Again and again, parents acknowledged that their fixed expenses exceeded their income, so that they were going further and further into debt. Those with savings had long since used them up.

A few typical families:

> Mrs. M. has one child who was terminated from public day care. She is pregnant with her second. Mrs. M. is unemployed and looking for work; she has had four jobs in the last five years. Her husband is disabled and cannot work. They receive $675 a month from disability and unemployment insurance. Of this, $400 a month goes for rent and utilities and $150 a month for food. Mrs. M.

did have a private babysitter to take care of the child while she looked for work, but this was too expensive.

Mr. and Mrs. F., both working, together make $800 a month. More than $600 of this goes to food, rent and utilities. They pay the babysitter $25 a week. When asked how they manage, they said "We pay off bills by installment."

Another working couple, the C's, have a combined income of $850 a month. Of this, $250 a month goes to rent, $200 to gas, electricity and telephone, $200 a month to food. When their child was terminated from public day care, they tried to find an alternative, but found private care very expensive. Now the child is alone after school until his parents return from work, although it is an arrangement that the parents are not pleased about.

Mrs. H., mother of two, was laid off from her job because of attendance problems caused by unreliable child care. At the moment her income of $500 a month comes solely from unemployment insurance and public assistance. She and her two children are under a great deal of stress because of financial difficulties. "I do without clothes for me and the children. We don't go out any more. I need new furniture, but I can't afford it. I concentrate on the basics."

Mrs. W., mother of four, is separated from her husband. Her income is only $340 a month, of which $120 a month goes for rent and $150 for food. She pays the woman who takes care of her child $15 a week plus food for the children. Additionally, two of the children have chronic health problems. Mrs. W. says: "I never have any money. I would like to be able to buy things for the children."

Mrs. F. has five children, ranging in age from 3 to 13 years old. The youngest has speech difficulties and another child has a physical disability. She would like to be able to do more for them, but she is trying to make it on less than $500 a month from public assistance. Expenses for rent, utilities and food run to more than this

> amount. She is distraught, and would like to look for work, but can't do this until she finds adequate care for all the children.
>
> Ms. G. is raising her child on an income of $500 a month. Mrs. G. has a chronic health problem and she says that sometimes when she needs money to buy medicine she has to go without food.

Special Needs

A number of families had children with special needs which made the necessity for support services more compelling.

Almost 18% reported that their children had physical, mental or emotional disabilities, chronic health problems, and/or emotional problems. Eleven children had multiple disabilities. These special needs created additional financial and emotional burdens; demanded a great deal of extra time and energy, and made it difficult to find adequate day care and appropriate school services. None of the families enrolled in public day care, however, mentioned difficulty with child care; all of those who were having difficulty finding care were in the terminated group.

An additional 11.3% of the respondents said that their children had serious behavior problems, or that the children frequently seemed unhappy or upset. Aggression and despondency were most frequently mentioned. When asked the reason for their children's problem, many parents (23%) said they didn't know. But among those who expressed an opinion, the explanation most frequently given (15.4%) was inadequate child care; the parents believed that the children needed more or better supervision. None of the enrolled group gave inadequate child care as a reason for their children's behavior problems.

Here are two contrasting stories: one of an enrolled family and one on the waiting list.

> Mrs. R. has four children. One has cerebral palsy as a result of premature birth. The other has very severe emotional problems -- his mother describes him as having "fits" during which he lashes out and strikes at his younger brothers and sisters. Mrs. R. has not been able to get into the public day care program, and she is very concerned about the arrangements that she is using. She is afraid that the sitter is not able to control the boy with behavior problems. Furthermore, the children are left alone for a couple of hours every day because the sitter is not able to stay until Mrs. R. returns from work. She would like a better arrangement, but has not been able to find one.

> Ms. E. was able to enroll her two children, who have been diagnosed hyperactive and who have learning disabilities, in a public day care program. She says that there has been a remarkable improvement in their behavior since they have been attending public day care. "They take good care of my children. I don't have to worry about them. They have really progressed a lot since they've been in the day care center."

Children Separated From Parents

A total of 15% of the families interviewed either had children not their own living with them (7.8%) or had children of their own not living with them (7.1%). The major reason for the latter (40% of the cases) was that the children were being brought up by a grandmother. Other reasons given were: inability to find adequate child care, parents' psychological or emotional problems, the parents' inability to cope, and other family problems.

Although the subsample is too small (n = 15) to draw definitive conclusions, it would appear from the data that enrollment in publicly funded day care services is an important factor in keeping families together. Conversely, termination from public day care may be exacerbating family problems or causing previously existing problems to resurface. The terminated group had a higher proportion of children under 14 living away from home than the enrolled group

(9.7% compared with 3.4%). Further, all (n = 4) of the children sent away in the year prior to the interview were from the terminated group. No children from the enrolled group had been sent to live away from home during this period.

Here are examples of family situations where children were living away from their parents:

> Mrs. S. is separated from her husband. She has four children, two of whom are not living with her. The youngest child is living with the grandmother, and one of the other children is living with the father. Mrs. S. has not been able to obtain public day care, and until she does, she feels she cannot cope with all four children. Her major problems are: she cannot find adequate child care; her income is only $340 a month; and she and the children live in a one-room apartment, which is all she can afford. Further, the two children with her have chronic health problems and are also showing signs of emotional disturbance.

> Mrs. H. has two children. She had the children in public day care but she had to terminate because the transportation that she had been using was not available any

longer, and there was no space in the center that was near her home. Because she was not able to make reliable alternate arrangements, Mrs. H. missed work so often that she was laid off from her job. Not knowing what else to do, she sent the youngest child to Puerto Rico to live with his grandmother. The other child is now in school, so she stays alone until Mrs. H. comes home from work. Mrs. H. is not happy with these arrangements, but she does not know what else to do.

Mrs. T. is a mother of two -- ages six and seven. She has had to send the children away to live with her sister. When she was terminated from public day care, Mrs. T. could not find reliable, good quality child care arrangements. The children were coming home from school and staying alone, and she didn't feel this was good for them. Furthermore, they were not doing their homework. Ultimately the mother felt so frustrated that she found herself beginning to become abusive to the boy. She felt that it would be better for the children if they went to live with her sister. She said, "I

> was so tired and he just wasn't doing his work." She reapplied for public day care but was told that there was no room. She had been on public assistance, but is now working and struggling very hard to make it.

Discussion

Public day care was clearly serving as an important support to working parents and their children. Those who were enrolled found it much easier to cope. They had less difficulty managing their work, child care and child-rearing responsibilities, and were much less likely to have to send their children away to live. Public day care services were very helpful to children with special needs.

"Natural" support systems, if available, were crucial in enabling parents to cope. Relatives, friends, family and household members, and neighbors were a source of help with child care and child-rearing, serving as a "backup" resource, and providing a "listening ear." Those who had such supports available had a much easier time of it than those who did not.

Many families, however, did not have these support systems. Especially hard-hit were the single parents living alone. A large proportion, particularly Blacks and Hispanics, led an isolated existence, with few or no relatives and friends nearby. Our interviews revealed two major reasons: lack of time to socialize and reluctance to go out in neighborhoods they considered unsafe.

Money was very scarce for these families, so buying services was not a ready option for them. In most instances, they did not have enough to pay for any recreation. Concern about finances was almost universal, and the need to pay for private child care added to the parents' burdens.

Public and community agencies were not seen as an important source of support by the interviewees. It was not clear whether they did know about the services available, did not perceive them as helpful, or found too many barriers to service (e.g. inconvenient hours, cumbersome application procedures, restrictive eligibility requirements).

G. Employment

Almost without exception, the participants in the study were attached to the labor force -- a full *95%* had worked. At the time of the interview 56% were employed and 15% looking for work. It was clear that the availability of child care, especially public day care, had been an important factor in enabling mothers to work.

In this section we examine some of the conditions of and the interrelationships between employment and child care.

To Work or Not

Overwhelmingly, these mothers and fathers worked because they needed the income -- close to 87% gave that as their primary motivation for going to or returning to work. Because of the economic imperative, mothers went or returned to work when their children were very young. Almost half went to work when the child was less than a year old; more than 85% before the child reached school age.

When parents contemplated employment, considerations such as the need to get out of the house, the desire for self-fulfillment or building a career were secondary to the need for current income. Financial independence, however, *was* important, expressed in statements such as: "I don't want to go back on welfare;" "I don't like to have to ask my husband for everything I want;" "I will never go on welfare -- I work."

When the interviewers endeavored to find out on what basis mothers made the choice to go to work vis-a-vis staying home with the child(ren), they discovered that the large majority did not see themselves as having a choice; they needed the money and therefore they sought employment. Most of the respondents, in fact, did not understand when they were asked "What factors did you weigh for and against going to work?" To them, working was a necessity in order to survive financially, and at the same time to preserve self-respect.

Nevertheless, the availability of child care was an important factor in the decision to work (a necessary condition for employment). The quality and cost of the available child care were also important considerations. In the final analysis, however, the need for money was the most compelling factor.

Ethnic Differences

Among the study sample, Black mothers of young children were more likely to be working than their Hispanic counterparts.* 60% of Black women were working and 15% looking for work, contrasted with only 44% and 13% respectively of Hispanic women. Historically, this has been true nationwide, and still is, although labor force participation rates among Hispanic mothers have been rising.[11]

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*The number of White families in the sample was too small from which to make generalizations.

Public Assistance

For most of the interviewees, public assistance was an undesirable option to be avoided at all costs, although many had to turn to it for support. Younger parents, particularly, tended to rely on public assistance to supplement family income; older parents tended to have greater ability to be self-supporting.

Public day care was an important factor in helping those who had been on public assistance to become and remain self-sufficient. As depicted in the following table, those who had received public day care had a better success rate in coming off public assistance than those who had not.

Table 6

RECEIPT OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BY GROUP

6A

Ever Received Public Assistance

	n	%*
Terminated Group	30	51.1
Enrolled Group	48	46.6
Waiting List Group	30	61.2
All	108	51.2%
		(Total n = 211)

6B

Those Ever on Public Assistance Who Were Self-Supporting at the Time of the Interview

	n	%*
Terminated Group	18	60.0
Enrolled Group	23	47.9
Waiting List Group	10	33.3
All	51	47.2

*Percentages are of the respective group

Looking For Work

As mentioned, 15% of the respondents (31 parents) were looking for work at the time of our interview. On the average, they had been actively seeking work just under six months, although a few said they had been job hunting a year or more.

When those who were neither working nor looking for work (29%) were asked: "What, if anything, would make it possible for you to work?", almost one-third answered "child care" and about one-quarter said that the availability of a job would motivate them to seek employment. Only three said they preferred to be at home with the children, three were full-time students, and seven had a physical or emotional disability that prevented them from being able to work.

Hours of Employment

Long hours of work were common. Only 8.6% of the employed respondents worked part-time; the rest worked at least 35-40 hours a week. Some regularly worked more than full time; six individuals reported working between 45 and 70 hours weekly. In addition, 32% worked overtime, either frequently or occasionally.

There were also 42 persons (35.6% of those employed) whose employers wanted them to work overtime, but who were either unwilling or unable to do so. In the main, this was because of a conflict with family responsibilities: the parent wanted to spend more time with the family (38% of those responding), or else there was no one to look after the children (19%) or to pick them up from their child care. The major problem that the respondents perceived from this situation was the loss of income. A few said that their employers got upset, and a few others said that it held them back from getting a promotion.

Generally the employers allowed little flexibility in arrival and departure time. Two-thirds of the employed respondents said they had little or no flexibility. Under 25% said they had "a fair amount" and 5% "a lot." Only five respondents said that they had a formal "flextime" system.

Only a handful of individuals surveyed worked other than "normal" business hours, i.e. arriving between 8 and 9 in the morning and leaving between 4 and 6 in the evening.

Salaries

Low salaries were typical. The median household income from wages and salary for those who were employed was $10,572,* significantly less than the New York City median of $12,168, which in turn is considerably below the national median of $16,830. The financial hardships imposed by these low salaries have already been extensively discussed.

Job Stability

On the whole, the employed respondents remained employed and did not change jobs very often. Just under half had held one job during the previous five years; another 28% had only had two. On the average, there was only one period of unemployment of more than a month during the five-year period. Older parents tended to have somewhat more job stability than younger ones, most likely reflecting disparate employment patterns of youth, documented elsewhere.[12]

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*Note that for some households in our study the wages of two or more persons were required to earn even this modest income.

Impact of Child Care Arrangments on Employment

When asked about the specific ways in which the child care arrangements affected their employment, all groups mentioned punctuality and attendance most frequently. Over 40% of the employed respondents said that their child care arrangements often caused them to be late; over 30% said that the failure of their arrangements caused them to be absent. Other related problems were the inability to accept additional job responsibility, the necessity to take the child to work, and the necessity to change either the nature of the job or the hours of employment.

Parents experienced varying degrees of difficulty taking time off from work if there were problems with the children. About 30% said it was difficult; another 30% said sometimes difficult, sometimes easy; and the other 40% had little or no trouble getting time off.

Discussion

Consistent with other research findings[13], the parents in this CSS study were working from economic necessity. True to Maslow's theory, "higher order" concerns like self-fulfillment, prestige, status, women's rights, etc. were hardly of concern to these parents; they were struggling for survival.[14] And the struggle was hard. Long hours and low salaries were common among the study sample.

Contrary, however, to other research findings[15], mothers expressed surprisingly little ambivalence about working vis-a-vis staying at home to care for the children. Most simply did not perceive that there was any option not to work.

Child care was an essential support which enabled mothers to work. It was clear from the study data that public day care had been an important factor in the decision to seek employment in the first place, and in many cases, this enabled women to leave the public assistance rolls.

For working mothers, the reliability and quality of child care had a direct impact on employment. When child care arrangements were unreliable, unstable, or worrisome, this had a negative effect on attendance, punctuality, and productivity. Increasing evidence about the relationship between child care and employees' availability and productivity has led many employers to provide child care supports of various kinds, and many others are considering providing such supports in the near future.[16]

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The families in this study could not afford much time from work to demonstrate their eligibility for day care, so they ended up paying more in the private market at rates which placed them in a greater financial bind.

SECTION IV

ISSUES AND CHOICES: DAY CARE OPTIONS FOR THE 80's

This study, *Day Care and the Working Poor*, speaks to the needs of low-income working families, especially those where the mother is the only parent in the home. We have examined how public day care affects their ability to manage their lives. These families are struggling to survive. For them, reliable child care provides a foundation for maintaining employment and insures a less crisis-ridden family and work environment. These families seek assistance, not dependency.

In reviewing the findings of this study, several issues emerge which have implications for how services should be provided and public benefits promoted for the working poor.

First of all, *children are being left alone while parents work.* This reluctantly used, makeshift arrangement places a special burden on school-age children who have outgrown full-day care and are either left unsupervised during after-school hours or are pressed into service to look after their younger siblings. In effect, these children are being required to provide an in-kind subsidy because of a system of day care that is clearly inadequate to meet the needs of working parents.

Do we, as a society, really wish this to be? We have other choices. The need for increased after-school services in schools, neighborhood centers, recreation facilities and other places where children normally congregate is crucial. Of course, some children can manage on their own without adult supervision. But many haunt us later on as statistics, when they develop serious problems that might have been prevented. Can society afford so many children at such risk? We think not.

As the previously cited U.S. News and World Report article states, school-age children left alone are exposed to the risk of emotional problems, substance abuse, delinquency or premature sexual involvement. Compared to the potential costs of these risks, increasing after-school services is a small price to pay indeed. Given that today's parents are working parents, these services are necessary as an economic support to families and as a social support to the development of children.

First, public funds must be provided and ways found, perhaps through innovative program modeling, to increase after-school services that are cost-effective and suitable to the needs of growing children.

Secondly, parents must be given access to information about services. Reorganizing information services hardly requires a major infusion of new funds, but rather a new public vision to assure that families who need help in finding day care and other public services can obtain it. Day care centers and other facilities administered or operated by New York City to provide neighborhood services for children and families--including schools--should have up-to-date information on the availability of child care services in the neighborhood, not only public day care but private resources as well.

The Agency for Child Development could assume responsibility for planning and maintaining an inventory of child care services and make this available to neighborhood facilities. Planning is needed also to initiate a system for registering individual private child care providers and for making the names available to parents who seek help in locating neighborhood child care. Further, a process for monitoring the delivery of such services could be established, by designing materials to inform parents of their right to expect quality child care and to encourage parent complaints about poor service delivery, similar to the system used in consumer affairs.

More formal structuring of services at the neighborhood level may counteract the isolation that parents, particularly young ones, now experience. And, as was recommended in our initial survey, better coordination among the Human Resource Administration's constituent agencies should be pursued to assure availability of and accessibility to the broad range of services now offered. This is particularly crucial for single-parent female-headed families who, as this study indicates, may need help in coordinating a "package" of child care, employment referral, job placement, and cash assistance.

Thirdly, administrative difficulties in the application and recertification for day care need priority attention. The initial survey documented that many families lose public day care because they miss appointments or do not present all the verification documents on time. The families we interviewed again reported that they lost much time from work in order to demonstrate their eligibility for day care, so they ended up paying more in the private market at rates which placed them in a greater financial bind. Expediting the recertification process, perhaps by mail or telephone, should be seriously explored.

Finally, the recent reductions in federal child care supports are bound to result in even greater hardships for families throughout the nation. Recent cuts in federal funding and basic changes in federal program regulations require that an appraisal be made of what the national impact will be, what the realistic options are, and how child care needs might best be met for low-income working families nationally.

Specifically, with the income disregard for child care expenses now capped at $160 per month per child and the standard of need for AFDC limited to 150% of gross income, those low-income working families who wish to remain independent of AFDC will have less economic incentive to do so. Working families on AFDC who are excessed out of that program under the newly-imposed limitations on gross income will have two choices if they need child care: applying for public day care subsidized through Title XX, or seeking child care in the open market. Let us examine both of these.

Public day care is not likely to be a viable choice. Because of the federal reduction in Title XX funding, New York City stands to lose $24 million in 1982. Furthermore, the City and State will have to decide whether priority for public day care will be preserved for low-income families. As for child care on the open market, we know it is a more costly, less reliable option at best.

Working families continuing on AFDC face similar difficulties; for example, if they place their children in public day care, the income disregard for child care at $160 per month will not cover the actual cost of public services for preschool children, which is about twice that amount. Presumably, the City could absorb the excess cost through Title XX subsidy, but this would reduce the availability of this source of funds for other needy families. The cost of public day care could be reduced, but only at the erosion of such basic quality control measures as adequate staffing and coverage, a planned educational curriculum, and a safe physical environment.

Certainly, exploration could determine how costs could be contained or, perhaps reduced, in public day care, but the outcome probably would be marginal at best. Barring a turnabout in newly imposed federal policy, New York State should explore how the standard of need might be realistically computed to cover better the child care costs of AFDC working families.

Another approach for relieving the burden on poor families of purchasing less than adequate child care in the private market is to review the fee structure of the City's day care program. Higher-income working families might well pay higher fees, given the cost and nature of the private child care market.* Revenues might also be sought for public day care from employers. The advantage of having a more stable and productive work force has convinced a number of companies to sponsor child care. One option is for employers to purchase child care slots for their employees at cost, thereby easing the strain on Title XX.

In addition, policymakers in government and industry should continue to explore ways to enhance the involvement of the private sector in providing child care for employees. Some incentives are already in place. Company child care expenditures are generally tax deductible, either as a necessary business expense or as a charitable contribution, depending on the legal status of the child care program. Two other suggestions were proposed at a hearing of the New York City Commission on the Status of Women in

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*Note that since this report was prepared the New York State Department of Social Services has revised the day care fee schedule. As of April 1, 1982, the initial fee-paying income was lowered from $7760 to $5690 for a family of two: all families with incomes above this level will pay $2 a week. Additionally, the entire fee schedule was revised upwards, with the maximum fee raised from $40 to $45 a week.

1980, namely, that 1) tax incentives and building code variances be granted to developers who include community space, suitable for a day care center, in new commercial construction, and 2) that states or cities levy a small tax on employers' payrolls in order to set up a revolving fund to finance the start-up costs of employer-sponsored child care programs.

Currently six labor unions run day care centers which are subsidized by the employers who hire their members. Centers are also sponsored by more than 100 hospitals and by 17 companies, including Wang Labs, Forney Engineering, Intermedics, Hoffman-La Roche and Corning Glass Works. Parent fees usually cover a portion of the centers' operating costs.

Employers who find it unfeasible or too costly to subsidize a child care center have other options: establishing a child care information and referral service (as Hewlett-Packard and Honeywell have done); subsidizing a portion of employees' child care expenses (Polaroid and the Ford Foundation); contracting with an established child care provider (Connecticut General Life Insurance Company); or forming a consortium to set up child care jointly with other area employers (Control Data Corporation). The Red Rope Company in Bristol, Pennsylvania is a good example of a small firm, employing many women in lower salaried jobs, that has found a day care center to be a productive investment for their operation.[1]

Ultimately, those involved in meeting working parents' needs for quality child care, whether under private or public auspices, find themselves grappling with the need to provide an education in addition to custodial care. Twenty years ago, the suggestion that young children could benefit from a preschool education was greeted with much skepticism. However, the experiments of the 1960's, such as Head Start, and the experiences of the Perry Preschool Project and others have provided convincing evidence of a child's ability to learn and improve the capacity to learn at an early age.[2] While conservative political rhetoric exhorts the image of a young child at home, in reality a majority of U.S. children today attend nursery school or pre-kindergarten. Upper and middle class children have always had the option of attending a preschool program. It is time to extend this benefit to the poor as well.

The argument goes beyond the economic issues of a falling school-age population or empty classrooms; the issue is every child's need for a stimulating and growth-inducing environment. Parents recognize this. Increasingly they seek ways to secure a preschool education for their children. Poor families use public day care or Head Start, if space is available and the location accessible, but such services are limited indeed.

Some school districts now provide pre-kindergarten classes, but because they are not mandatory under existing state law, the availability of that program is minimal and, until recently, depended primarily upon Title I (ESEA). Extending the school budget to support early childhood programs needs to be fully explored. At a minimum, it would free up the more limited

Title XX social services funds to provide after-school day care.

One of the major obstacles in pursuing universally accessible early childhood education has been the opposition of some day care advocates and private providers, who perceive the expansion of the public school into this area as a way of that institution gaining a monopoly on the provision of early childhood education. This can be avoided by designing a system for preschool services, including education, which would seek to coordinate the various services available and, most importantly, insure family access to them based on a mixed model. Such a system would include a centrally-located facility in a neighborhood which would provide information and access to services to meet the convenience of the family and the needs of the child. By including school-based early childhood education, day care, Head Start, and private nurseries in this system, resources -- always a scarce commodity -- and, especially access to them, would be greatly expanded. Although highly controversial, a voucher system (child care stamps for the poor) might be the best way to assure the range of services needed, and at times best suited to the needs of the family. Higher-income families would of course use their own funds to participate in this system as well.

In conclusion, the Community Service Society's child care study, begun in 1978 in the wake of New York City's budget cuts, now offers a prophetic overview of the probable consequences of the current federal budget reductions on day care and the remedies that are available.

Our findings reveal that whenever possible, low-income working parents seek quality child care that is educational rather than custodial. Moreover, of immediate and perhaps tragic consequences, many young children are regularly left alone while their parents work because public care is not available and private care is not affordable.

We have documented the measurable differences that public day care makes in helping working poor families to maintain economic self-sufficiency and to manage more adequately as wage-earners and parents.

Based on our data, we believe there is a very strong case for public and private support of day care for these families, both preschool and after-school. Granted, this will require additional funding now, but without basic supports to families who are struggling to survive economically, we will surely be required to provide more expensive remedies in the future.

At the same time, we have outlined several strategies that might better allocate the resources we now have: improving interagency coordination; setting up child care information and referral services; creating a competitive, mixed system of preschool services, so that current funding streams can be better used to trigger a broad range of needed human services; and extending tax credits to the private sector to encourage business to provide child care as an employee benefit.

As we consider the needs of today's children, we are talking about a different American family than existed fifty years ago.

And we are talking in the context of a half-century of growing national commitment to preventing the kind of dependency and multiple social problems among the poor that ultimately impoverish us all.

We are talking, specifically, about families who are struggling to pay their own way in society. Both wisdom and justice demand that this nation make the necessary investment to offer these parents and their children the basic support required.

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APPENDIX A

HIGHLIGHTS OF PHASE I:
A STUDY OF NEW YORK CITY DAY CARE ELIGIBILITY POLICIES

CSS focused on short-term effects in Phase I (The Day Care Eligibility Study), although we hypothesized that there would be longer-term effects that we would not be able to measure initially. For example, our study found that there was neither a significant loss of jobs nor a significant increase in persons receiving public assistance. Yet, our data did show some measurable loss of employment and evidence that the loss of day care services did have a discouraging effect on those who were looking for work. In addition, over one-third of the working parents reported specific job problems, such as attendance, punctuality, and the necessity to take their children to work with them. And there was additional worry about the children's safety and well-being which, parents said, interfered with their productivity. CSS believed that undoubtedly these problems would, over time, have an impact on employment status and income.

Further, Phase I of the Day Care Eligibility Study examined quality of the alternate arrangements that families made.

Over half of the families in our sample made multiple arrangements for child care. About 20% of the parents used more than two caregivers during the day; one family reported using as many as five different child care arrangements. This lack of continuity in a child's care has already been documented as undesirable for a child's development and potentially harmful.

About one third of the employed parents reported no alternate child care arrangements. We assumed that they must be leaving their children alone while they were at work. Many of these children were six or seven years old and some even younger. In addition, for a number of other youngsters, child care arrangements did not provide complete coverage, so they were left alone for part of the day.

Most critical was the finding that, in total, more than half the children in Phase I were left without supervision for all or part of the day while their parents worked. The mothers we spoke with expressed considerable concern about their children's safety while at home alone. Some reported various negative behaviors due to lack of supervision -- children spending hours in front of the television, being destructive in the house, acting out with their siblings or calling the parent constantly at work.

By and large we found that the alternate care arrangements were not very reliable. About 30% of the parents indicated that their child care arrangements had broken down at least once a month. Most resolved the problem by staying home from work. This, we assumed, would have a potentially negative long-term effect on employment.

Cost was a significant factor for these families. Almost two-thirds of the respondents were paying for child care at the time of the study, compared to less than a third who had paid while in public day care. Fee-paying families in public day care spent an average of about $12 per week per family; private arrangements cost families almost double that amount.

Most respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the arrangements they had been able to make. However, it must be kept in mind that researchers into child care agree that satisfaction is almost always overstated. Parents are reluctant to admit that they are less than fully satisfied with the arrangements they have been able to make for the care of their children, particularly if they do not see any other choice.

Asked about their preference, a far more reliable indicator of satisfaction, the large majority stated a preference for a structured arrangement such as group or family day care. In contrast, arrangements with private individuals are usually custodial in nature (like babysitting). Yet parents overwhelmingly expressed a desire for their children to learn and play with other children in a more educational setting.

Additionally, the nutritional benefits that the children had received in public day care were very important to most parents. All of these elements were lacking or less than adequate, the parents felt, in the private arrangements they had been able to make.

And finally, the difficulty with child care arrangements seemed to add to the stress that low-income families, especially single parents, experience in their attempt to cope with child-rearing, working and just making ends meet. Among our sample of parents terminated from public day care services, over three-quarters of the official reasons for involuntary terminations had to do with failure to comply with administrative requirements: 57% failed to appear for the recertification appointment and 20% failed to produce sufficient documentation.

Respondents' reasons for not appearing were varied: they included the client's decision to voluntarily withdraw, circumstances that prevented their appearance such as illness or inability to take time off from work, or the fact that he or she did not receive the notification or did not understand it. It seems apparent that the notification procedures for terminations and fair hearings are not adequate.

APPENDIX B

IMPLICATIONS OF RECENT FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE CHANGES FOR CHILD CARE

AFDC:

Up to now, the full cost of child care for a working mother in the AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) program was considered a necessary work expense and was disregarded from her income for purposes of both determining eligibility and computing benefits. The Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981, the new federal budget legislation, provides that a maximum of $160 per month per child for child care expenses be disregarded when figuring the income of a working mother in the AFDC program.

Note that $160 is not an automatic amount but a maximum, so that only the actual amount will be disregarded up to $160 per month per child. A lesser amount will be allowed if a woman is working only part-time or for part of the month. If the actual cost of child care is greater than the allowable disregard, a woman will have to make up the difference out of her own budget or forego some child care services.

Title XX:

The Title XX program provides block grants for social services, with the money distributed to the states on a per capita basis. A larger proportion of Title XX funds is used for day care than for any other social service. In fiscal year 1978, for example, day care expenditures under Title XX were

$731.3 million nationally, or more than one-fifth of all Title XX program expenditures.

The 25% reduction in Title XX funding for fiscal year 1982 means a substantial decline in the amount of money potentially available for day care services. Further, states are no longer required to match federal funds with their own money. Formerly, a 75% federal-25% state match was mandated for most Title XX allocations. Nor are states now required to allocate a specific portion of the funds for welfare recipients. Further, in keeping with the current administration's generally stated philosophy of reducing federal requirements on states' use of federal funds, states are no longer required to limit eligibility for services to individuals and families whose incomes fall below 115% of the state median income.

As a result, not only will less money be available for day care services under the new budget, but paradoxically, the population of potentially eligible users will be greatly increased.

Child Care Tax Credit:

The new tax legislation liberalizes the credit that working parents may claim for child care expenses on their federal income tax returns. Currently, this credit is set at 20% of the first $2,000 in child care expenses (up to a maximum of $400) and 20% of the first $4,000 for the care of two or more children (up to a maximum of $800).

Starting in 1982, the credit has been increased and modified on a sliding scale basis so that families with smaller incomes are eligible for a potentially larger credit.

The new maximums, for families with an adjusted gross income of $10,000 or less, are 30% of the first $2,400 in child care expenses (up to $720) for the care of one child, and 30% of the first $4,800 (up to $1,440) for the care of two or more children. The maximum credit decreases as income increases. Families earning more than $30,000 are eligible for a credit of up to $480 for one child (20% of the first $2,400 in expenses) and $960 for two or more children (20% of the first $4,800).

For lower-income families, however, the liberalized credit does not promise to be much of an advantage. First, few families with incomes of $10,000 or less can afford to pay sums like $2,400 or $4,800 for child care, so that any credit claimed is likely to be far less than the maximum. Second, it is well-known that a great deal of child care used by such families is "informal" -- or to put it more bluntly, "off the books." Transactions are made in cash and are not reported for social security or other tax purposes. Therefore, they are not likely to be claimed for a tax credit.

Child Care Food Program

The Child Care Food Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has reduced the number of subsidized meals provided children in day care programs from three meals and two snacks to two meals and one snack. Income guidelines for eligibility determinations have also been changed. The individual family's income rather than the average income of families whose children attend the center will now be used, which increases the administrative complexity of the program. Food programs in family day care have been reduced by 10% as of September 1981.

On a somewhat brighter note, Head Start has received an appropriation increase to $950 million for fiscal year 1982. Along with the milestone Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare legislation, these measures should afford some day care relief, but only for special groups of needy children who are poor, handicapped, neglected or abused. On balance, however, the federal day care provisions can hardly be said to approach meeting the existing needs.

APPENDIX C

WORKING HYPOTHESES

1. Younger parents tend to rely to a greater extent on family members within the home for child care than older parents do.

The data do not support the hypothesis. On the contrary, the younger parents in this survey tended to use public day care. As the children got older, the parents were more inclined to seek out alternative forms of care or to leave the children by themselves. Additionally, older parents often had higher incomes that could make them ineligible for public day care services.

2. Teenage parents tend to rely to a greater extent on extended family members for child care than older parents do.

The data do not support this hypothesis. (See discussion under hypothesis #1).

3. Younger parents tend to have more sporadic labor force participation than older parents.

There was a tendency for younger parents to have more sporadic labor force participation than older ones: 52.5% of the 20-29 age group* had two or more jobs during the five years prior to the interview, compared with only 42.6% of the 30-35 year-olds and 23.5% of the over-35 age group. Similarily, 61% of the over-35's said they had no periods of unemployment of more than a month during this five-year period, in contrast to, only 27% of the 20-29 year-olds.

*Age at the time of the interview.

4. Younger parents tend to rely to a greater extent on public assistance to supplement family income than older parents.

The data support this hypothesis, as can be seen by the table below.

		Age Group (at the time of interview)				
Pub. Asst. Rec'd. since Birth of Child		16-19	20-29	30-35	Over 35	Total
Yes	n	1	56	37	13	107
	%	100	60.9	46.8	34.2	51.0
No	n	0	36	42	25	103
	%	0	39.1	53.2	65.8	49.0
Total						
	n	1	92	79	33	210
	%	0.4	43.8	37.6	18.1	100

Eta=0.2 p .015.

5. Families with more than one preschool child tend to have greater difficulty in securing child care arrangements (i.e., more time used in locating).

There is not a definitive relationship between time spent locating child care and number of pre-school children.

6. Families with more than one preschool child tend to be less satisfied with child care arrangements.

The data do not support this hypothesis.

7. Families with more than one preschool child tend to have a more sporadic labor force participation.

The data do not support this hypothesis.

8. Families with more than one preschool child tend to have less stable (i.e., more breakdowns) child care arrangements.

There are not enough cases to accept or reject this hypothesis, but the data indicate that there may be a tendency worth further investigation.

9. Families with more than one preschool child tend to have less continuity in their child care arrangements.

There was a relationship between the number of preschool children and the number of times parents had to change their child care arrangements. Over 65% of the families with no preschool children said that they did not change their child care arrangements during the year and a half prior to the interview; 16.7% had to change more than once. On the other hand, only 41% of the families with more than one preschool child sustained a single arrangement during this period, and 26.5% had to change their child care two or more times.

10. Two-parent families, both parents working, tend to have more income available to purchase child care.

Clearly, two-parent families have more income than single-parent families. Whether, in fact, that income was used for the purchase of child care was not clear from the data.

Corollaries

10A Two-parent families, both parents working, tend to have less difficulty in securing child care.

There was no evidence to support this hypothesis.

10B Two-parent families, both parents working, tend to be more satisfied with child care arrangements used.

There was no evidence to support this hypothesis.

11. Two-parent families, one parent working, tend to have a more stable labor force participation than other types of families.

There was no evidence to support this hypothesis.

12. Families who have received public assistance since the birth of the first child tend to have less difficulty in securing alternate child care arrangements than those who have never received public assistance.

There is no evidence to support this hypothesis.

13. Families who have children with special needs tend to have more sporadic labor force participation than those who do not.

There are not sufficient cases to accept or reject this hypothesis; many mothers of children with special needs are not employed.

14. Families who have children with special needs tend to make more attempts before they succeed in securing child care.

There are not sufficient cases to accept or reject this hypothesis.

15. Families who have children with special needs tend to have child care arrangements that are less continuous over time.

The data do not support this hypothesis; the data on continuity over time show no significant difference between families who have children with special needs and those who do not.

16. Families who have children with special needs have to pay more for child care arrangements.

The data do not support this hypothesis.

17. Children with special needs tend to have more difficulty adjusting to alternate child care arrangements.

The data do not support this hypothesis.

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18. Families with more than one adult other than the parents in the household tend to use one of the adult household members for child care.

There were not a sufficient number of families with more than one adult other than the parents to test this hypothesis. Overall, household members were used by one-third of the cases for regular child care. It was the second most common type. Household members were also used extensively for occasional and/or backup care.

19. Families with an extended family member in the neighborhood tend to use this relative for child care.

Relatives in the household and in the neighborhood were extensively used both for regular child care and for occasional/backup care.

20. Families with older children tend to make no alternate arrangements for child care.

The data do not show a clear relationship between the age of the children and whether or not arrangements were made.

21. Families who use an adult member of the household as an alternate child care arrangement, tend to be less satisfied with the arrangements than those who use other kinds of care.

There are too few respondents who express dissatisfaction with their child care arrangements to be able to test this hypothesis.

22. Families who use nearby extended family members for child care tend to be less satisfied with the arrangements than those who use other kinds of care.

There were insufficient cases to test this hypothesis.

23. Employed parents who leave their children alone tend to be less satisfied with this arrangement than working parents who make other alternate child care arrangements.

The data support this hypothesis. Parents who left their children alone had a much higher rate of dissatisfaction. 46% said they were not satisfied with this arrangements, compared with only 13% who were not satisfied with public day care and 15% who expressed dissatisfaction with private care.

24. Working parents who make alternate arrangements for care of their children tend to have less sporadic labor force participation than those who leave their children alone.

The data do not support this hypothesis.

25. Families who use a nearby extended family member for child care tend to have more difficulty with such arrangements than those who use other arrangements.

There were no data to support this hypothesis.

26. Families with greater stability in labor force participation tend to have less difficulty in securing alternate child care arrangements.

There was no evidence to support this hypothesis.

27. Families with greater stability in labor force participation tend to have greater stability in their child care arrangements.

The data do not support this hypothesis.

28. Families who have used public day care and terminated tend to be less satisfied with alternate arrangements than either those who continue in publicly-subsidized day care or those who have never been enrolled in public day care.

The data do not support this hypothesis. The group that tended to be the least satisfied was the waiting list group.

29. Families who remain in public day care maintain employment more successfully than those who do not.

Although individual families lost employment as a result of termination from public day care, there was no aggregate difference between those who remained in public day care and those who did not.

30. Families in public day care maintain their income more successfully than those who do not.

The data with respect to the relationship between the change in income and receipt of public day care are inconclusive because of intervention of other variables such as remarriage. There was a significant difference, however, with respect to dependency on public assistance. Those who continued in public day care showed the best success rate in coming off public assistance (60%), those in the terminated group second best (47.9%), and those who were on the waiting list the lowest rate (33.3%). See Table 5 in the Findings Section for details.

31. Families in public day care experience fewer problems relative to day care that interfere with their employment than those who have private arrangements.

The data do not support this hypothesis.

32. Private day care arrangements provide less continuity of care over time than the child care programs.

The data do not support this hypothesis.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE SELECTION AND ANALYTIC PROCEDURES

SAMPLING

Sample Selection

As described in Section II, the initial pool of cases was randomly selected. For two of the groups -- terminated and enrolled -- the cases were chosen by computer; for the waiting list group they were chosen manually. During the initial phase of telephone contacts, the field supervisor carefully monitored the interview assignments to be sure that equal attempts were made to contact all eligible cases, in random order.

Where there was no answer or the respondent was not at home, the interviewer called back until some contact was made. If there was no home telephone, or if the number was unlisted, the potential respondent was called at work. If these two methods failed, an attempt was made to reach the individual through the "emergency" number that the parent had given to the ACD day care program.

These procedures were designed to eliminate, or at least minimize, respondent/non-respondent bias. The success of this strategy is demonstrated in Tables D-1 and D-2, which show no significant differences between respondents and non-respondents on two important variables: claim category and zip code.

Prior to making the interview appointment, interviewers asked screening questions in order to ascertain the respondent's eligibility for the sample. Eligibility criteria were:

For the terminated group: that the family had had a child enrolled in public day care who had been terminated during the period in question, that the respondent had been interviewed for Phase I and that none of the children were currently enrolled in public day care or on an active waiting list.

For the enrolled group: that the individual had children currently enrolled in public day care, and that they had not been previously interviewed by CSS during Phase I.

For the waiting list group: that the individual was on an active ACD waiting list, and that they currently had no children enrolled in public day care, nor had they been previously interviewed.

If the screening criteria were met, and the respondent was willing, an appointment was made for a face-to-face interview.

Representativeness

To what extent was the sample representative of the larger universe? To answer this question, we compared the CSS sample with other data that were available.

The terminated group was a subsample of the 500 persons interviewed for Phase I of the study. There was ample evidence that the 500-case sample was representative of the terminated population as a whole*, therefore a comparison of the Phase I and Phase II samples will suffice to evaluate the representativeness of the latter. Comparisons of claim category and zip code are inherent in Tables D-1 and D-2. As mentioned, these show no important differences.

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* See Phase I report, Methodology Section and Appendix B.

Additionally, the two samples were almost identical with respect to race and sex:

	Phase I	Phase II
White	4	4.8
Black	56	64.6
Male	4	5.6
Female	96	94.4

Based on these data, we can be reasonably confident that the terminated sample is representative of the terminated population as a whole.

The enrolled group was compared with a sample taken by ACD from its March 1980 caseload, as shown in Table D-3.* Although there were minor, scattered differences, the two samples were well matched on: claim category, marital status, family size, number of children, employment status, average annual income, and receipt of ADC.

Therefore, although the CSS sample was a small one (n=59), it appears to be reasonably representative of the enrolled population.

No data were available from ACD on the waiting list group, therefore no comparison could be made.

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*From "Socio-demographic Characteristics of Clients and Applicants in New York City's Day Care Program" NYC Human Resources Administration, December 1981.

In view of the foregoing, it can be said with some certainty that the experiences of the families described in this report reflect the experiences of the broader population they represent: i.e., families who have applied and been deemed eligible for public day care in New York City.

Table D-1

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS AND NON-RESPONDENTS

CLAIM CATEGORY BY INTERVIEW STATUS

Claim Category	Respondents		Non-Respondents		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	5	2.4	9	1.2	14	1.5
2	1	0.5	0	0	1	0.1
3	2	1.0	1	0.1	3	0.3
4	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	42	20.5	173	23.5	215	228
7	7	3.4	42	5.7	49	5.2
8	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	1	0.5	9	1.2	10	1.1
10	1	0.5	1	0.1	2	0.2
11	1	0.5	11	1.5	12	1.3
12	62	30.2	200	27.1	262	27.8
13	68	33.2	238	32.3	306	32.5
14	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	15	7.3	48	6.5	63	6.7
16	0	0	5	0.7	5	0.5
Total =	205	100	737	100	942	100

Table D-2

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS AND NON-RESPONDENTS

ZIP CODE BY INTERVIEW STATUS

Zip Code	Respondents n	Respondents %	Non-Respondents n	Non-Respondents %	Total n	Total %
100	30	14.2	178	23.4	208	21.4
103	1	0.5	8	1.1	9	0.9
104	54	25.6	166	21.8	220	22.7
110	0	0	2	0.3	2	0.2
111	12	5.7	19	2.5	31	3.2
112	67	31.8	285	37.5	352	36.3
113	13	6.2	29	3.8	42	4.3
114	31	14.7	54	7.1	85	8.8
116	3	1.4	19	2.5	22	2.3
Total	211	100	760	100	971	100

Table D-3

COMPARISON OF CSS ENROLLED GROUP SAMPLE WITH ACD ENROLLED SAMPLE

Claim Category		CSS Sample[a]	ACD Population[b]
6	(ADC-non WIN)	25.4	27.4
11	(one-person)	1.7	1.5
12	(no-fee)	33.9	36.7
13	(fee-paying)	39.0	24.1
All Others		0.0	10.3
Marital Status			
Married		15.3	15.8
Separated or Divorced		50.8	46.7
Never married		32.2	35.1
Widowed		1.7	2.3
Family Size			
2		28.8	41.4
3		42.3	32.8
4		15.4	13.1
5		7.7	7.5
6 or more		1.9	5.2
	Mean	2.7	3.1
Mean Number of Children		1.9	2.0
Proportion Employed		72.9%	64.0%
Average Annual Income		$9257	$9086
Proportion of ADC Recipients		29%	37%

[a] Selected from the May 1980 computer run of ACD enrolled cases.

[b] Claim Category is based on the May 1980 computer run of the entire caseload. All other variables are based on a 338-case sample selected by ACD in March 1980.

ANALYSIS STRATEGIES AND PROCEDURES

Because of the broad scope of this child care study, the possibilities for data analysis were vast. It was therefore essential that a systematic procedure of analysis be given high priority so we would not become overwhelmed by the magnitude of the data while taking full advantage of their richness.

Sequence of Analysis Strategies

Three broad strategies of analysis, carried out sequentially, were extensively used: descriptive statistics, comparative analysis and explanatory analyses.

Descriptive Statistics. Often the most important survey findings are based on the simplest forms of data analysis. Such univariate analyses are of great importance in their own right. Although the primary purpose was to discover relationships among sets of variables, this study examined such descriptive data as means, standard deviations and response distributions for many of the variables. In addition, since the number of items per respondent could be more confusing than helpful, some of the items were condensed in two ways: first, by narrowing down the number of categories for a particular variable, and second, by constructing new indices utilizing combinations of variables within the same general category. For example, monthly income and working parents were important socio-economic indicators. Not only could amount of monthly income be regrouped into a smaller number of categories for ease of analysis, but a new variable called "working parents" was constructed from associated variables, giving an insight into the monthly amount of family earnings, the number of hours worked in a week and the work history of a parent.

Comparative Analysis. Comparisons among variables and between subgroups regarding the same variables were at the heart of the data analysis. The differences and similarities that were documented, primarily among income, number of working parents or the type of child care used, were of great import. Specifically, the differences (or similarities) in the types of child care that were available and utilized for various families were crucial to this study. Correlations, cross-tabulations and mean-difference testing were used to clarify these relationships and discover others.

Explanatory Analysis. The major use of the relationships encountered among variables and baseline statistical inference was to contribute to our understanding of 1) child care availability and need and 2) its linkage to family utilization of child care facilities. The development of this understanding emerged from relationships and interactions that occurred over time. This was a cross-sectional yet retrospective study that allowed for the analysis to examine current child care availability and need across variables with an historical perspective: work history, past salary, past satisfaction with child care, etc. While there was a pressing need to examine past child care practices and current availability of such services, there was also an urgent need to look to the future and predict child care needs for families. The analysis tried to use the relationships established between variables as a basis for establishing future child care norms.

Summary. With the use of the DEC-20 computer and the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS), our data were analyzed in a "funnel" process. First the raw data were presented in Chapter III with basic descriptive statistics and frequencies for the major indices of the study as well as a breakdown of these statistics for those variables across groups within the sample. Then, using cross-tabulation, correlations and mean-difference testing procedures among variables and subgroups, the interdependencies, associations and comparisons were explored in depth for bivariate relationships, especially examining the variances in the variables given a specific subpopulation. Finally, multivariate techniques such as multiple cross-tabulation and index construction yielded the interrelationships between independent and intervening variables and within subgroups while disaggregating and characterizing the possible effect upon a small collection of theoretically determined dependent variables and indices. The variables included in the various analyses in the study are listed under the conceptual category to which they relate in Table D4. The table also indicates the items in the questionnaire which related to each variable, the label or labels given to each variable and the type scale appropriate for each variable.

Table D4

TABLE OF VARIABLES FOR HYPOTHESIS TESTING

HYPOTHESIS	INDEPENDENT	DEPENDENT
1. Younger parents rely on family members more than older parents.	Age of parent	Type of child care
2. Teenage parents rely on extended family members.	Age of parent	Type child care 5 yrs. ago
3. Younger parents more sporadic labor force participation.	Age of parent	Number of different jobs number of periods of unemployment, length of time in job
4. Younger parents rely more on public assist.	Age of parent	Public assistance status
5. Families more than one pre-school child greater difficulty.	Number of preschool children	Difficulty locating child care
6. Families more than one pre-school child less satisfied.	Number of preschool children	Satisfaction with child care
7. Families more than one pre-school child more sporadic labor force participation.	Number of preschool children	Number of different jobs
8. Families more than one pre-school child less stable child care arrangements.	Number of preschool children	Number of break-downs of child care
9. Families more than one pre-school child less continuity of caregiver.	Number of preschool children	Number of changes, number of arrangements
10. Two-wage earner families have more income available to purchase child care; Therefore:	Number of working parents	Gross income, disposable income, amount paid for child care

A. Experience less difficulty finding care;	Number of working parents [see above]	Difficulty
B. Are more satisfied with care.	Number of working parents [see above]	Satisfaction
11. Two-wage earner families more stable labor force participation.	Number of working parents [see above]	Number of jobs, number of periods unemployment, length of time in job
12. Families who have received public asst.	Ever rec'd pub. asst.	Difficulty
13. Families with children w/special needs have more sporadic labor force participation.	Children w/ spec. needs	Number of jobs held, number of periods of unemployment, length of time in job
14. Families w/children w/special needs make more attempts.	Children w/ spec. needs	Number of attempts made length time looked
15. Families w/children w/special needs less continuous overtime.	Children w/ spec. needs	Number of times changed arrangement
16. Families with children w/special needs pay more for child care.	Children w/ spec. needs	Fees paid
17. Children w/special needs have more difficulty adjusting.	Children w/ spec. needs	Adjustment
18. Families . . . more than one other adult use member of household.	Number of other adults	Type care, reliance on household members
19. Families w/ extended family member in neighborhood tend to use this relative.	Number of relatives in neighborhood	Type care, reliance on relative
20. Families w/ older children tend to make no alternate arrangement.	Age group of children	Whether alternate arrangements are made

21.	Families who use adult member household are less satisfied.	Type care	Satisfaction
22.	Families who use nearby extended family members less satisfied.	Type care	Satisfaction
23.	Employed parents who leave children alone less satisfied than working parents.... other kinds.	Type care (control for unemployment) Children alone	Satisfaction Satisfaction
24.	Working parents who make alternate arrangments less sporadic l.f.p.* than those who leave child alone.	Whether alternate arrangements are made	Number of jobs held, number of periods unemployment, length of time in job
25.	Families use nearby extended family member have more difficulty with such arrangement.	Type care or use extended family	Reliability
26.	Families with greater stability l.f.p. tend to have less difficulty securing child care.	Number of jobs, number of periods unemployment, length of time in job	Difficulty locating
27.	Families w/greater stability l.f.p. tend to have greater stability in child care arrangements.	Number of jobs, number of periods unemployment, length of time in job	Number of child care arrangments
28.	Terminated families are less satisfied with alternate arr.	[COMPARISON OF GROUPS]	
29.	Families who remain in day care maintain employment more successfully.	Group # (i.e., terminated, enrolled or waiting list	Change in employment status
30.	Families in public day care maintain income more successfully.	Group #	Change in income

* l.f.p. stands for labor force participation.

31. Families in public day care have fewer problems relative to employment.

32. Private child care arrangements provide less continuity of care than public day care arrangements.

[COMPARISON OF GROUPS]

APPENDIX E

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY SAMPLE

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SEX	All	Terminated	Enrolled	Waiting List
Male	5.6	10.30	0	2.1
Female	94.4	89.7	100.0	97.9

-%-

AGE OF PARENT	All	Terminated	Enrolled	Waiting List
Under 16	0	0	0	0
16 - 19	.5	1.0	0	0
20 - 29	43.8	38.2	44.1	55.1
30 - 35	37.6	39.2	37.3	34.7
Over 35	18.1	21.6	18.6	10.2

-%-

RACE	All	Terminated	Enrolled	Waiting List
White	4.8	4.9	5.1	4.2
Black	64.6	70.6	66.1	50.0
Hispanic	29.7	24.5	27.1	43.8
Asian & Other	1.7	2.1		

-%-

MARITAL STATUS	All	Terminated	Enrolled	Waiting List
Single	31.0	23.5	32.2	44.9
Married, Living Together	30.5	48.0	15.3	12.2
Married, Living Apart, not Legally Separated	18.6	10.8	23.7	28.6
Legally Separated	6.2	5.9	6.8	6.1
Divorced	11.9	9.8	20.3	6.1
Widowed	1.9	2.0	1.7	2.0

-%-

HOUSING	All	Terminated	Enrolled	Waiting List
Own Home	13.0	6.9	0	0
Co-op	2.0	0	0	0
Rent	85.0	93.1	100.0	0
Kind of Residence				
Private Home	17.6	22.3	15.3	10.4
Two-Family Dwelling	9.5	13.6	6.8	4.2
Multi-Family Dwelling, 5-story or less	18.6	23.3	13.6	16.7
Apartment House, Private	24.8	16.5	23.7	43.8
Public Housing Project	29.5	25.2	40.7	25.0

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MONTHLY RENT OR CARRYING CHARGES	All	Terminated	Enrolled	Waiting List
0 - 49	4.9	2.1	6.8	8.5
50 - 99	4.5	2.0	5.1	8.5
100 - 149	19.2	7.2	37.3	21.3
150 - 199	21.2	23.8	18.6	19.1
200 - 249	19.7	22.6	18.6	14.9
250 - 299	14.2	18.6	6.8	14.9
300 - 349	7.9	9.3	3.4	10.7
350 - 399	4.0	7.2	1.7	0
400 and over	4.4	7.2	1.7	2.1
Mean		$205.35	238.41	169.83
181.68				
Median	$199.5	224.6	149.75	178.00

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NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 14	All	Terminated	Enrolled	Waiting List
0	3.3	3.9	3.4	2.0
1	33.2	28.2	32.2	44.9
2	40.8	45.6	39.0	32.7
3	17.1	17.5	18.6	14.3
4	4.7	4.9	6.8	2.0
5	.9	0.0	0.0	4.1
Mean	1.9	1.9	1.93	1.82
Median	1.83	1.89	1.87	1.6

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RESPONDENT'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHILDREN	All	Terminated	Enrolled	Waiting List
Parent	94.9	92.5	96.6	98.
Step-Parent	.45	.9	0	0
Foster Parent	.45	.9	0	0
Grandparent	2.3	1.9	3.4	2
Legal Guardian	0	0	0	0
Other	1.9	3.7	0	0

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AGES OF CHILDREN	All	Terminated	Enrolled	Waiting List
2 or under	15.9	16.8	11.0	20.2
3 - 5	31.1	18.8	43.2	42.7
6 - 8	27.6	34.2	22.0	20.2
9 - 11	17.6	19.8	18.6	11.2
12 - 14	7.8	10.4	5.1	5.6
Mean	5.98	6.56	6.05	4.96
Median	6.33	7.26	5.7	5.1
Total number of children	409	202	118	89

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EMPLOYMENT STATUS (Respondent)	All	Terminated	Enrolled	Waiting List
Employed	55.9	51.5	72.9	44.9
Looking for work	15.0	16.2	25.7	15.0
Neither	29.1	32.3	1.4	40.1

MONTHLY GROSS INCOME	All	Terminated	Enrolled	Waiting List
0 - 249	4	3.1	3.4	6.4
250 - 499	26.7	24.0	20.3	40.2
500 - 749	27.2	20.8	37.3	27.7
750 - 999	18.8	21.9	18.7	12.7
1000 - 1249	11.9	10.4	13.5	12.8
1250 - 1499	2.0	2.1	3.4	0
1500 - 1749	4.0	6.2	3.4	0
1750 - 1999	0.9	2.1	0	0
2000 + over	4.5	9.4	0	0
Mean	771.32	905.74	698.53	588.1
Median	652.50	799.7	640.00	500.5

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE				
% On Public Assistance	29.1%	27.1%	20.7%	42.9%
% Not on Public Assistance	70.9%	72.9%	79.3%	57.1%

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